



# MIND AND ITS CULTURE



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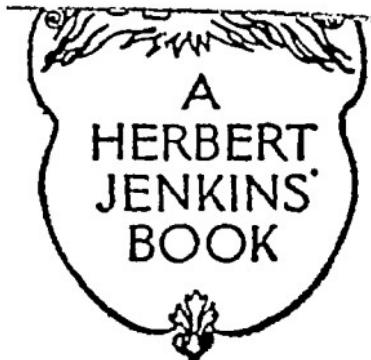
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"Pure Pleasures," "Man's Immortality and Destiny,"  
"Woman—Her Charm and Power,"  
"Hours with the Immortals,"  
etc. etc.

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शा टी.



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**ANDREW CARNEGIE, Esq.,**  
**IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION**  
**OF THE SERVICE HE HAS**  
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**MENTAL CULTURE,**  
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## PREFACE

With genuine sympathy for all who struggle and aspire, this book has been prepared, and it will be a real joy for us to act as the "guide, philosopher, and friend" of any who are seeking self-improvement.

ROBERT P. DOWNES.

ST CLARE,  
UPPER NORWOOD.

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL CULTURE .



# MIND AND ITS CULTURE

## CHAPTER I

### THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTAL CULTURE

The peak is high, and flushed  
At its highest with sunrise fire,  
The peak is high, and the stars are high,  
But the thought of man is higher

TENNYSON

Man is a reed, and the weakest reed in Nature, but then he is a thinking reed. There is no occasion that the universe should arm itself for his destruction. A vapour, a drop of water is sufficient to kill him. And yet, should the universe crush him, man would still be more noble than that by which he fell, because he would know his fate, while the universe would be insensible of its victory

PASCAL

THE value and importance of mental culture will appear from the fact that next to the God-consciousness which renders man capable of worship, and the moral-consciousness which renders him capable of virtue, it is by his intellect that he is throned above all meaner creatures in the world around him. It is his mental capacity which constitutes him a creature who is not only wonderful, but who also wonders—a creature who is not like the plant or the animal, merely a part of nature, and more or less merged

in nature, but a self-conscious personality standing off from mere nature and interrogating it, analysing it, mastering it.

In man, Nature first begins to know herself. He is the being who first asks, "Whence? What? Whither?" He is the world's self-surveying eye, the world's self-hearing ear, the world's self-ennouncing voice. A German thinker—crushing into a single sentence volumes of metaphysics—says, "God sleeps in the stone, dreams in the animal, and wakes in the man."

### **MAN, THE THINKER**

Many definitions have been given of the word "man." Plato once said that man was "a two-legged animal without feathers," on which Socrates brought a cock despoiled of its plumage, and exclaimed, with fine irony, "Behold Plato's man!" Man has been defined by others as a laughing animal, a weeping animal, a cooking animal, an animal who can paint his own portrait. The word "man," however, is really derived from the Sanskrit, *manu*, to think. Thus, man is primarily a creature who thinks.

The brute is capable of thought, and, apart from the instinct which is the direct whisper of God to it, possesses a certain degree of

intelligence. But the brute never classifies, never analyses, never forms abstract conceptions, never reflects on what is passing around it, never, in the true sense of the word, *thinks*. But man can arrest a passing impression, hold it in his grasp, scrutinise its elements, trace out its relations, magnify or extenuate it, work it up into a science—or bury it in oblivion. Locke, the great metaphysician, has been represented as teaching that there is nothing in the intellect which has not come through the senses. But Leibnitz adds, with great force, “*sed intellectus*”—but the intellect. The senses give us reports of outward things, but it is the mind which receives and reflects on those reports, and it apprehends beauties and relations which to the brute are utterly unknown. The brutes have senses in common with ourselves, but they do not see what we see, or hear what we hear.

The ox tramples on the daisy and is insensible to its beauty, but the peasant poet is arrested by the

Wee, modest, crimson-tippéd flower,

as by a tender thought of God. The vision of the eagle is keener and more far-reaching than ours, but the cloud palaces amid which it sails,

with their "looming bastions fringed with fire," suggest to it nothing of majesty or mystery. The ear of the hound or of the antelope is more sensitive than ours, but the tinkling runlet of the mountain-side has for them no music; the cry of the thunder suggests to them no echo of the voice of God, while the symphonies of Beethoven in their ordered and suggestive grandeur are to them but a combination of confused and unintelligible noises.

It is the mind which draws meaning out of the reports given in by the senses, which discerns in the sublime and the beautiful the autograph of the Deity, which wrests from the lower world its secret and its meaning, and which, when it is weary of inquiring there, lifts itself out on the roof of the star-gemmed dome of space, and gazes from thence in wonder and in awe on the far-spread gleam of the spires of other cathedral splendours which rise and shine in the astral City of God.

#### THE MAJESTY OF MIND

It is on record that Alexander the Great once paid a visit to Diogenes, the ill-clad, ill-housed philosopher, and on Diogenes asking the conqueror who he would prefer to be if he were not Alexander, the monarch replied: "If I

were not Alexander I should prefer to be Diogenes ”

To the unthinking, the reply may appear strange, if not indeed absurd, but for the thoughtful it holds in its grasp a fine meaning. It is greater to be a thinker than to be a conqueror, greater to sway the sceptre over realms of mind than over continents of matter

The kings of thought reign longer and more mightily than the kings of empire. David was a great monarch and also a great soldier, whose arrows were terrible in the day of battle. But his war bolts are all spent and rotted, while the silver shafts of song, which sped from his harp of solemn sound, still fly through the dusky years, not for wounding, but for life and healing. Henry VIII. and Queen Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I., made a great stir in their time, but their lives and deeds are fast melting away into oblivion, while the empire of Shakespeare, and Bacon, and Milton, widens with the lapse of years. The pomp of kings and conquerors as they storm across the centuries is but a vain and fleeting pageant when compared with the enduring majesty of the masters of creative thought. “Great and sceptred sovereigns these still rule our spirits from their urns” Not without reason did Alexander envy the lot of

heroes like Achilles, Hector, and Patroclus, who had found a Homer to perpetuate their fame. "The Conqueror of the Earth," says Goethe, "did reverence to a poet; for he felt that without a recording poet, his own wild and vast existence would pass away like a whirlwind, and be forgotten for ever."

Man, after all, is the great thing on this earth—its summary, epitome, and crown—and mind is the great thing in man. It is idle to speak of the vastness of the material universe and to argue therefrom the nothingness of man. The universe, as material, is after all but a great and glorious clod. Make of it what you will, with its imposing pomp, and what is it to the mind whose thoughts "wander through eternity," and in whose spectral infinity it lies like a filmy dot? What is it to the mind whose high prerogative it is to gather in upon itself, as on a mirror, the glories of the visible creation and flash them back to God in wonder and in worship? What is it to the mind which in place of being, as the planets are, the slave of inexorable law, is master of its own volitions and able to defy the very Power who brought it into being? What is it to the mind which, when heaven and earth have fled away and there is no place found for them, may still—

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The darkening universe defy,  
To quench its immortality,  
Or shake its trust in God ?

## THE MEANING OF MENTAL CULTURE

The possibility of mental culture—of the enlargement and improvement of our intellectual gifts—is apparent to every student of his own nature. We are all conscious of a self-forming power which, fitly exercised, may make for finer being. We have a voluntary command over our mental processes by which we can control, direct, and regulate them at will. Endowed with reason, and gifted with the faculty of self-determination, we can mould and fashion not only things around us, but ourselves. We are responsible not only for what we do, but also for what we are. We are scholars, and we are also masters. The wise book or the wise friend may teach us, but we can also become teachers of ourselves. We can strengthen and perfect our mental vision. We can win for our minds clearness, accuracy, and precision. We can so train our mental faculties as to conceive justly what we think about—to abstract, compare, analyse, divide, define, and reason correctly.

All this will appear from a thoughtful consideration of that important faculty of the mind,

*the understanding.* This is the power which observes and reflects, which collects premises and deduces inferences, which has truth for its object and logic for its guide. It includes the faculty of *comparison*, which enables us to discern the resemblance of objects to one another or their difference from one another; the faculty of *abstraction*, which enables us to fix our attention on some one part, property, or quality of an object to the exclusion of all other parts or properties which go to make up the complex whole; the faculty of *generalisation*, which enables us to rise from particular facts to general laws—to group and arrange various objects under one comprehensive thought—as Newton did when he swept all the movements of the stars into the one conception of gravitation, and as Darwin did when he included the development of all living creatures in the one great idea of evolution; the faculty of *judgment*, or, in other words, of common-sense, which enables us to pronounce definitely on certain truths, to know that a thing is thus and thus, and not otherwise; and the faculty of *reasoning*, which enables us to deduce one truth from another in consecutive order.

As far as we can see the reflective faculties may be cultivated without limit. Let us seek

self-improvement in this important sphere, asserting the superiority of our mental to the merely physical part of our nature, and in this field seek those pleasures which never pall upon the soul, and which, unlike the hoof-prints of animal appetite, leave no degradation in their tread. Oh, brothers, friends,

Arise and fly  
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast,  
Move upward, working out the beast,  
And let the ape and tiger die.

### THOUGHT RULES THE WORLD

The importance of the cultivation of our mental powers will appear if we remember that, for good or evil, thought rules the world. It is the seed of all actions, and of all institutions. Its "path is on the sea." Its footsteps leave no trace. Silent, visionless, trackless is its going, as that of a spirit. But it bows the world to its will.

For all ultimate and efficient causes we must refer to the realm of mind. It is mind that is in every case the first mover or originator of every effect. Take a simple illustration—the driving of a nail. A hammer, or some like instrument, is essential to this. The hammer may be called the cause of the nail being driven.

The blow struck by the hammer may also be so designated. More properly the hand which dealt the blow, and most correctly the mind which willed the movement of the hand.

### IDEAS FIRST

Ideas always come first. Whatever a man consciously makes is always a thought before it becomes a thing. A thing is but the embodiment of a thought. "The steam-engine," says Emerson, "is only a great idea dressed in iron. It ran in the thinker's brain, before it ran on the steel rails." The cathedral is the thought of the architect expressed in stone. The statue is the sculptor's thought uttered in marble or in bronze. The painting is the limner's thought wrought out into expression on the canvas. The oratorio is the tone-poet's thought breathed out in thrilling and subduing music. Hamlet and Caliban, Othello and King Lear, are thoughts of Shakespeare, peopling an ideal world, yet a world as wonderful and as real as that actual human world which invites our scrutiny in daily life. The stars of heaven are but a few of God's thoughts expressed in matter. The Incarnate "Word" is God's great thought of love, expressed in mind.

Positively measureless is the power of thought. It can bring with it "airs from heaven, or blasts from hell." It can pollute or it can enoble. It can kill or it can make alive. If it be pure and true, as soon as it thrills into speech the universe becomes for it "a whispering gallery around which the imprisoned utterance runs and reverberates for ever." Let it be pure and true and nothing can withstand it. From the silence of the thinker's chamber it goes forth, but that still lightning will yet roll its thunder and launch its bolt, and when you see that towering iniquity stricken to its fall—know that the thinker has done his work. "Let the world take care," says Emerson, "when God lets a thinker out on it, for he will turn it upside down."

### THE ORIGIN OF MIND

No man is mentally self-made. He is first of all God-made. The human mind is the counterpart and the evidence of mind in God. Mind in man is a proof of a supreme, originating, constructing, informing and inspiring mind. Irresistibly convincing are the words of Carlyle, where, writing concerning Frederick of Prussia, he says: "Atheism he never could abide; to

him, as to all of us, it was flatly inconceivable, that intellect, moral emotion, could have been put into him by an Entity which had none of its own."

It is true that the informing intellect within us has been transmitted through a human ancestry, by which it has been deeply tinctured, but its original source is God. "There is a spirit in man," says one of the greatest of all thinkers, "and the breath of the Almighty giveth him understanding." And in another place, from the same lips, we have the thrilling question addressed to the finite creature, "Whose spirit came from thee?"

Man must first accept his intellect as from the hand of God, and then make the best of it by assiduous culture. He cannot create, but he can nurture and develop the gift of the Creator.

He was a wise man who said, "I cannot lay claim to greatness, but I have made the best of the material with which I was endowed."

Of this we are all capable. It is pitiable, however, to note how this self-evident duty is neglected by the majority of men. Sir William Hamilton aptly defined man as "an intelligence served by organs" How many around us pamper the organs while they neglect the

intelligence ! What a wealth of God-like faculty is allowed to rust within man unrecognised and unused ! Wordsworth's motto was "Plain living and high thinking." The fitting motto of most men in these days, when the quest of wealth is so keen an appetite, would be "High living and plain thinking." Everywhere we see men chasing the means of living, and forgetting the inward things which alone can give real value to those means. It is forgotten that knowledge and wisdom and a completed manhood are as much better than costly dinners, fine clothes, and splendid houses, as the soul is better than the senses. Often of large capacity, and by nature manly and industrious, men have no time but to buy and sell, and the result frequently is that, as the business increases, the man decreases.

#### **FOOD FOR THE MIND**

"We cannot live by bread alone." The intellect as well as the body needs strong, regular, solid food. We live by thought as well as by bread. The thirst for knowledge and the desire to grasp some portion of the vast measure of it The love of beauty and the desire to deepen our appreciation of it. The sympathy

we naturally feel with all things animate or inanimate which bear on them the stamp of God's wisdom and fashioning, and the longing to know more of their significance and their meaning. These things knock at the door of the soul and should receive response and due attention.

#### SCHOOL-TIME AND AFTERWARDS

It is a delusion to suppose that when we leave school our education is finished. As a matter of fact it is only just begun. Life itself is but a great school. From the cradle to the grave we are scholars. The voices of those we love, the wisdom of past ages, and the lessons of experience are our teachers. School is only the seminary or seed-plot of our life, the real growth is the work of after years. Our education will never be finished so long as we are in the world—nay, it will stretch out into eternity. The school teacher has only initiated our education. He has stimulated and directed our mental powers. He has put us in possession of the means of improvement. He has furnished us with the implements with which we may cultivate the field of the soul; unlocked for us the treasury of knowledge that we may enrich

ourselves with its spoils; constructed for us the scaffolding behind which we may rear the intellectual superstructure—all the rest depends on our own self-application, and resolve.

We quit the school of our youth for the great arena of life and we are amazed to find how little we really know. We speedily learn that “our knowledge is but a drop, while our ignorance is a sea.” If we are brought into contact with cultured and thoughtful people we are humbled, if not indeed ashamed, of the multitude of things concerning which we are painfully ignorant.

### A KINGDOM TO CONQUER

We are indeed startled to find how vast is the kingdom which invites our conquest, and how multitudinous the voices which appeal to us, seeking some adequate response to the messages they bear—

The intelligible forms of ancient poets,  
The fair humanities of old religion,  
The Power, the Beauty, and the Majesty,  
That have their haunts in dale, or puny mountain,  
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring,  
Or chasms and watery depths.

The whence and how of the lily's loveliness, the rose's wealth of colour, the violet's perfumed breath—all springing from the dull, dark earth. The marvels of light and heat, electricity and magnetism. The ministries of dew and shower, sunshine and heaving sea. The secret of life and form in beast and bird and insect. The mystery of man in his greatness and meanness, his travail and his triumph. The movements of History, with its fallen thrones, and shattered dynasties, and tumultuous peoples. The sleepless law of Evolution permeating all time, all space, all being. The message, mighty and majestic, which the heavens could declare were not the finger of an everlasting silence placed upon their lips. For some knowledge of these things we might fitly

Labour day and night  
With love and longings infinite.

#### INCENTIVES TO MENTAL CULTURE

Worthy incentives to mental culture are not far to seek. To begin with, such culture greatly enriches our personal life. By expanding our affections and enlarging the sphere of our sympathies; by making us feel more deeply our relation to universal being alike in time and

in eternity ; by widening our intellectual outlook and directing our vision at last to the great and beneficent Cause of all, mental culture unquestionably refines our nature and elevates us in the scale of being. There are many apartments in the palace of the soul, and some men live only in the dungeons and lower rooms. But the truly cultured man dwells in the higher chambers which command landscape, and sea-scape, and the illimitable heavens.

Diligent self-culture creates an inner life which is enriched by every outward circumstance. Where this exists everything becomes instructive and opens up some new vista to the reflecting mind. Nothing is uninteresting or common-place. The smallest things in Nature summon up infinite relations. Every stone in the path-way suggests the idea of eternity through the geologic ages which have made it what it is. Every distant planet brings a message of infinity in the sweep of its orbit. "The meanest flower that blows," as Wordsworth confessed, brings with it "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears" The rainbow reveals the wealth of colour imprisoned in the sunlight, and breaks its silence to whisper of God's ancient promise to the world's grey fathers.

No lily-muffled hum of summer bee,  
 But finds some coupling with the spinning stars ;  
 No pebble at your feet but proves a sphere ;  
 No chaffinch, but implies the cherubim . . .

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
 And every common bush afire with God

### CULTURE AND DIGNITY IN LIFE

Mental culture dignifies life by delivering it from the dominance of trifles. It demands a place for those larger issues of being and of character which refine and enoble.

In an assembly of people who have neither read deeply, nor given themselves to any form of serious thought, it is positively humiliating to note the trivialities in which they are alone interested, and which are the only topics of conversation.

Goethe confessed that he could not find in the conversation of the society of his time matter for the very smallest of poems, and most thinking men have shared his experience.

Unless some flagrant scandal is in the wind, or some social or political crisis is in the air, it consists of mere empty and unmeaning chatter from which a refuge is at last sought at the card-table.

It was Schopenhauer who said that the

invention of cards was a striking proof of the emptiness and vacancy of the human mind.

### CULTURE THE REMEDY

The fitting culture of our mental faculties is the only remedy for this state of things. It opens up a wider horizon, and leads to the consideration and discussion of themes more worthy of "a being of large discourse, looking before and after." Only a man of wide and noble culture could have furnished the world with such a presentment of the fitting conduct of life as that of W. E. Gladstone, where he says : "To resist the tyranny of self ; to recognise the law of duty ; to maintain the supremacy of the higher over the lower parts of our nature—this is our responsibility for life and its gifts."

We must cherish the splendid possibilities with which we are endowed, nay, more, we must be "in tune with the Infinite," to reach our truest selves. It is of such that Keble sang—

There are in this loud stunning tide  
 Of human care and crime,  
 With whom the melodies abide  
 Of the everlasting chime,  
 Who carry music in their heart,  
 Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,

Plying their daily task with busier feet,  
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat.

Yet, further, mental culture not only enriches our personal life, but renders us of greater value to our fellows. We cannot confer more on others than we have gained for ourselves. The fountain must be full before it can overflow. A narrow, empty, and frivolous manhood or womanhood is of little value in the world. Poor in itself, it has no largess to scatter on the indigent. But on the other hand—

We cannot weigh the influence of a mind  
By truth illumined, and by taste refined.

### CULTURE AND JOY IN LIFE

Mental culture is a never-failing fount of joy as far as our earthly existence is concerned. The keener the sensibilities, the more acute the judgment, the more delicate the taste, the more refined the moral feelings, the more subtle the intelligence, the loftier the religious instincts and aspirations, the purer and intenser are the gratifications which existence yields. To the sensitive and receptive mind, all avenues of joy are open, from delight in "the primrose by the river's brim," to the grand anticipation of the beatific vision. A cultured man has no

*cnnui* and no loneliness. In the audience-chamber of his mind the wise, the noble, and the brave are continually present. He communes with anointed poets and enjoys the brotherhood of angels. Only the noble can attract and entertain the noble. The joy of the thinker is free from reproach, and inaccessible to shame. It leaves no stings behind and distils no poison. His pleasures are cheap, dignified, and innocent, and no accidents of adverse fortune can embitter or destroy them.

### CULTURE AND BEAUTY

Beauty, again, is born of mental culture. It is the parent of loveliness alike of body and of soul. What sculpture is to the marble block, culture is to the mind. It moulds it into ordered loveliness and repose. Our tastes, desires, and aspirations are silent sculptors fashioning us after their own likeness. On our features as well as on our character the fine chisels of thought and emotion are ever at work. The mind asserts its rightful sovereignty over the clay and shapes its temple at will. If a woman wishes to realise the full power of personal beauty, it must be by cherishing noble thoughts and gracious purposes. A thoughtless, frivolous girl of the pink-and-

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white order, with a mind totally unfurnished, may be considered in some sense beautiful, but it is a beauty which will not endure. The lines of the poet are appropriate here—

Beautiful ! yes, but the blush will fade,  
The light grow dim which the blue eyes wear ,  
The gloss will vanish from curl and braid,  
And the sunbeam die from the waving hair  
Turn from the mirror and strive to win  
Treasures of loveliness still to last ;  
Gather your glory and joy within,  
That the soul may be bright when youth is past.

**ATTRIBUTES OF  
MIND . . .**



## CHAPTER II

### ATTRIBUTES OF MIND

How fraught with Hope, how fair and wide,  
The Kingdom ardent Youth may sway,  
If Conscience rule whato'er betide,  
And Duty, honoured, lights the way  
If trust in God dispels the fears  
Which threaten with their fateful wings,  
And on life's mystery and tears  
A radiant Faith its rainbow flings  
• If Prudence checks each base desire,  
And Will prevails o'er passion's thrall,  
And Reverence guards the sacred fire,  
Heaven kindled, in the breast of all

R P D

By the mind of man we understand that in him which is separate and distinct from his physical organism, and which thinks, remembers, reasons, wills, wonders, worships. The system of psychology which confined the powers of the mind to the mere intellect is now effete and exploded. Mind and soul are no longer separated in thought, but included in the one conception of the spiritual element in man.

Rightly considered, the human mind is not simple, but complex. It includes a wonderful variety of gifts and powers. Aristotle's accepted definition of the soul runs thus: "The soul is

that by which we live, feel or perceive, move and understand ” Dr. Reid uses the word soul as synonymous with mind. There is really no dualism in the thinking principle. The most cursory view of our complex nature is sufficient to convince us how splendid are the faculties within us which call for culture and development.

There is—

### **UNDERSTANDING—**

the student, cleaving with delight to necessary, eternal truth as expressed in mathematics or in the ordered sequences of music, and rising through the processes of reason to the apprehension of those immutable laws “ whose seat is the bosom of God and their voice the harmony of the world ” As man is the finite image of God, so reason or understanding in him is a finite transcript of the mind of God To despise reason is to despise the inward oracle of heaven. What we need to avoid is the influence of a faulty education together with those entanglements of prejudice and passion which warp the judgment and draw it aside from the poles of truth, as the proximity of certain metals disturbs and deviates the magnetic needle.

There is—

### AFFECTION—

the lover, putting forth its tendrils to clasp dear human things that it may live by them. This is the power which creates home sanctities and keeps them fresh and warm—the father's willing service, the mother's heavenly care, the brother's manly chivalry, the sister's clinging trust. This is the fount of pity, and devotion and self-sacrifice. “Out of the heart are the issues of life.”

•  
By Love subsists  
All lasting grandeur, by pervading Love ;  
That gone, we are as dust

How needful it is to culture with assiduous care this flower saved from the wreck of Paradise and keep it fresh and fair! Contact with the world too often makes for hardness, and we need to resist its petrifying influence. To love is to be God-like, for God is love. “An infinite of tenderness,” says Ruskin, “is the chief gift and inheritance of all truly great men.” The dear religions of the heart must never be neglected or ignored, but rather rise and flow until they reach and rest in the boundless sea of the love which is eternal and divine.

There is—

**IMAGINATION—**

the poet, combining the original and the actual into forms of ideal beauty, and rising on radiant pinions into a region of loveliness to which the heaven of heavens is but a veil. This fine endowment we must guard from every touch and taint of impurity. The picture-gallery of the soul : we must expel from its walls every incitement to lust and uncleanness. Then for its appropriate nourishment we must place it in contact with the sublime in Literature, the magnificent in Art, and the beautiful in Nature, from the daisies which gem the sod, to the stars which glorify the night. Neither must we check, but rather exercise it, in the power by which it may take wing and build its nest under the very eaves of heaven.

There is—

**WILL—**

the field-marshal, the determining and executive power, controlling all the forces of the mind and all the impulses of the heart with a might at once imperial, supreme and God-like. We must keep this faculty where God has placed it—on the throne. We must strengthen it by daily exercise in things which involve some degree of sacrifice and self-denial. We must place before

it continually the most powerful motives to virtue which the mind can frame, motives drawn not only from this but also from a diviner world. And because the battle with passion and desire cannot be fought in our own strength, we must wait upon God that His in-breathed power may prove to us a fount of unfailing and puissant energy.

There is—

### CONSCIENCE—

the judge, refusing to be bribed by the tempter though all the kingdoms of the world were laid at its feet; scorning to bow to anything inferior to the sacred law of duty; tremulously, yet steadfastly, gazing upon God, of whom it is the whisper and the sentinel. We must be watchful and diligent in the cultivation of this faculty, since it is only by securing its practical supremacy over every impulse that we can attain to a bold, pure, self-respecting manhood. We must keep alive in us this spark of celestial fire. We must give heed to whispers of conscience as well as to its thunders. We must respect its doubts where it does not seem imperatively to decide. We must hear the voice of God in it, recognise in its slightest touch and monition the ineffaceable impress of His hand, and let the world go by.

There is—

**DESIRE—**

the merchant, sleepless in its quest of some sufficing good, launching its argosies on every sea, spreading its sails to every breeze, bringing on dreaming keels its treasures from afar. Here we need most carefully to weigh the objects of desire. To test their quality and enduringness. To take heed that our chase is not a chase after vanities—bubbles which shine for a moment and then vanish into air. Amid the noises of the fair we need, like Bunyan's pilgrim, to close our ears, and, hastening onward, cry: "Life! Life! Eternal Life!" The boundless character of our desires is in itself a proof that we are created for a grander world than this, and possessed by this conviction we must needs take the wheel and steer into eternity.

There is—

**VENERATION—**

the worshipper, kindling its altar fires, swinging its fragrant censer, and raising its song of glad thanksgiving to the "Giver of every good and perfect gift." We must take care to keep this, the noblest of all our faculties, alive. Our crowning glory is our spiritual affinity with God. The thwarting of this magnificent capacity is

the great secret of man's unrest and degradation  
His greatest sin and his supremest folly is the  
sin and folly of keeping God out of his life.

Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with  
spirit may meet,  
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands  
or feet.

There is—

#### **MEMORY—**

the treasure-house of the past, retaining impressions and recollections so multitudinous that it would appear as if the heavens themselves were too small a scroll to contain them. With what fidelity it records and recalls at will the scenes of vanished years, notably those of early youth, when the mind was as wax to receive and as marble to retain the record of the days and hours. The first wild outbreak of childish passion and self-will, revealing deeps of peril and of power of which we did not dream. The companions who lowered our ideals, or stirred us into nobleness. The books which informed and uplifted, or left in their track the serpent slime which stains and poisons still. The sad defeats which humbled us, or the moments of magnificent resolve when the good in us awoke and put the fiends to flight. The wail of the

funeral anthem as our mother's sacred dust was borne through the cathedral door to burial, with the insult of the sun's intrusive brightness and the discord of the lark's shrill carol, as her coffin sank into the inexorable grave.

O Death in Life, the days that are no more  
Like all other powers of our complex being, memory may be cultivated, and like all other powers, it gains strength by exercise. Let us beware of the guilt which makes memory a curse. This is an awful power when it rises up in accusation against us. As far as we can judge, there is no such thing as absolute forgetfulness possible to the mind. Every deed we have performed, and every thought we have cherished, abides in us for ever. Let us, therefore, take heed to the character of our deeds, and guard with zealous care the purity of our thoughts.

There is—

### **HOPE—**

the angel of the future, tracing on its canvas pictures yet unrealised, of anticipated joy; flinging her bow of promise on the blackest cloud, lighting her lamp beneath the darkest sky, providing for the deadliest malady a medicine, and for the deepest wound a balm.

True Hope is swift, and flies on swallow's wings ;  
Kings it makes gods, and meaner creatures kings

Let us thoughtfully consider on what objects our hope is fastened, and whether it may not prove in the last result disappointed and ashamed. Let us be mindful of the fact that all our anchors slip and shift, save that anchor, sure and steadfast, which enters within the veil. There let us fix our hope, and that last bewildering wave which we call death will only lift us above the harbour bar into that eternal haven of the soul which no storm can vex or wildering tempest chafe.

### OUR GREAT KINGDOM

This brief review of our finer faculties cannot fail, if duly weighed, to convince us of the splendid kingdom we inherit as creatures made in the image of God, capable of thought and self-direction, and called to honour, glory and immortality. Invested by the Creator with capacities and powers so magnificent and far-reaching as those to which we have referred, we must not creep or behave ourselves poorly, but prove "loyal to the royal" in ourselves.

In every investigation of man into the sublime arcana of Nature, in every successful mastery of its laws and forces, in the lofty discoveries of

Science, in the exquisite productions of Art, in that hunger and thirst of his spirit which nothing in the outward world can still, we have evidence of faculties which crave a still broader stage and a still fuller development—faculties which afford the majestic assurance that this imperial creature cannot be formed for a mere temporary existence, but that there is yet a sphere where in the glory of his strength and the fullness of his possibilities the universe shall unveil to him its hidden magnificence, and the God of the universe shall fold him to His heart.

Masters of life, with power to shape and mould it as we will, let us then rise up and build, not a hovel, but a temple, not a structure marred by freaks of chance and void of noble purpose and design, but something which shall possess majesty, symmetry, and ordered beauty.

Humboldt says : “The finest result which earth can show to its Maker is a finished man.” It is for the achievement of this result that all worthy self-culture toils and strives And toward this goal all human feet may travel.

COUNSELS CONCERNING  
MENTAL CULTURE . . .



## CHAPTER III

### COUNSELS CONCERNING MENTAL CULTURE

Let us be assured of this,  
Ignorance is never bliss,  
It is knowledge which inspires  
Noble aims and pure desires,  
Saves the soul from passions' thrall,  
Yields response to duty's call,  
Strangles serpents, conquers hate,  
And defies the shocks of fate  
Cherish, then, the sacred fire,  
Evermore, Aspire! Aspire!

R P D

While the feeble and irresolute languish in inaction, cheated by anticipation, and effecting nothing, though expecting and within reach of all things—wealth without labour and a life without care—the strong and energetic rush forward, and succeed in their quest of the best which life can offer

ACTION

In this chapter we offer a few counsels, based on experience, to seekers of Mental Culture Let us observe at the outset that we live in times peculiarly favourable to such culture—in times when, indeed, it is good to be alive. We are those “on whom the ends of the world are come.” The splendid results of all the past centuries of human thought and discovery lie at our feet to be appropriated at will. To every youth and maiden who can read, the richest

treasures of mind are accessible. Never was there so much which it is worth our while to know, and never was there such a willingness to impart knowledge.

The great thinkers of our time "know not merely for knowing's sake, but to become as stars to men for ever." Lectures by the masters of modern science, bringing the latest revelations concerning God's vast universe down to the cottar's door, may be purchased for the price of entrance to a puppet show. For a few shillings we may become possessors of the finest fruits of the finest literature ever given to the world. A narrow bookshelf may contain a store of hoarded wisdom, which in distant centuries the wealth of Croesus was powerless to command. If it be neglected what a Paradise Lost is here! Here are celestial gardens

Where falls no rain, or hail, or any snow,  
Nor ever wind blows loudly

The doors of our free libraries stand open for the entrance of the lowliest, and they contain not only the well-thumbed novel, but the finest records of biography, history, travel, and philosophy.

9

Every young man and maiden possesses untold wealth as the result of their youth.

The energy of youth is as yet unblunted by defeat, and unworn by hope deferred. Self-confidence, if it does not degenerate into self-conceit, is a great thing. Dr. Arnold says: "The difference between one man and another is not so much in talent as in energy." "Step by step," reads a French proverb, "one goes very far." The most useless lounger has no excuse for want of intellect. What our young people want is not talent, but strenuous purpose, not the power to achieve, but the will to labour. "To-day," says Goethe—

To-day, to-day, only show valiant face,  
And you have gained a hundred years of grace.

#### HAVE AN EARNEST PURPOSE

Life has many claims and many duties, but nothing in it can be more important than the condition of our own minds. To keep them vacant when they may be richly furnished, and in darkness when they may be filled with glorious light, is a poor return to the Creator for a gift so splendid as that of the human intellect. And nothing in this realm will be achieved without earnest purpose.

There must be entire commitment or there will be no achievement. We cannot dream ourselves into culture, we must work for it. To

this end, whatsoever hinders or entangles must be cast aside, and the fragments of time improved that nothing may be lost. Genius has been defined as “an infinite capacity for taking pains.” It is true that this is but an imperfect definition of the power which creates—the power which in the greatest men seems to leap on God’s own throne and call into being that which was not—but there is much in it which demands attention. A mind of the richest soil, if uncultivated, will become barren and fruitless. Hence the many instances we meet with in which men of second-rate ability surpass men of supreme power by sheer industry and application. Of too many it must be said, that

Their drooping sails  
Flap idly 'gainst the mast of their intent,  
They rot upon the waters when their prow  
Should grate the golden isles

Mental culture implies the improvement of our minds by our own personal effort. Opportunities and means of this culture appeal to us continually, but they can only aid us by our own concurrent purpose. Only through ourselves can we come into the real possession of our mental heritage, and rise to the full appreciation of the splendid faculty with which we are endowed.

Heaven's best aid is wasted upon men  
Who to themselves are false.

A rich domain of mind is ours, which may flower into a veritable Eden, but we must dress and keep it. "The ground beneath our feet," says an American thinker, "is capable of indefinite bettering. No farmer has ever compelled from his acres the uttermost blade of corn or produced the last violet, so that the land shall say to the husbandman: 'Hold! this is my very best' And no man has ever yet exhausted the powers of use and beauty which he folded in his mind "

Greatly begin! though thou have time  
But for a line, be that sublime—  
Not Failure, but low aim, is crime!

### **CHERISH FAITH IN YOUR OWN FACULTIES**

A confident faith in your own powers is essential in the work of mental culture. Cherish a confident belief in your power to acquire knowledge. The paralysing and fatal unbelief is disbelief in yourself. Your advantages may have been limited, but your heritage as human is great. In virtue of your humanity you contain within you every principle which is found in the universe. You are able to experiment on every phase of truth and being, and to obtain direct

knowledge of them by evolving in yourself the corresponding qualities and potencies Your intellect is related to all truth, your imagination to all beauty, your heart to all love, your conscience to all duty, your spirit to all which is divine and eternal. Ever remember

It is the lifted face which feels  
The shining of the sun

These varied powers, which are your human birthright, may differ in intensity and clearness in differing minds By some, again, they may have been cultivated, and by others permitted to lie dormant But they are the common gifts of the Creator to all men. You should, therefore, never despair of acquiring knowledge, seeing you are constituted

A sensitive being, a receptive soul,  
The friend alike of Nature, and of God

We say, then, to all into whose hands our words may fall: Trust yourself. Believe in your own capacity for thought, and in your ability to acquire knowledge. The place you occupy may be a lowly one, but from the lowest depth there is a path to the loftiest height. Come into harmony .

With those elect,  
Who seem not to compete or strive,

But with the foremost still arrive,  
Prevailing still:  
Spirits with whom the stars connive  
To work their will

#### HAVE REGARD TO YOUR OWN SPECIAL APTITUDES

The discovery of our special aptitudes is of great importance in the sphere of mental culture. Men differ in their ability to acquire different kinds of knowledge. If we set ourselves to tasks for which we have no taste and with which we have no mental affinity, we do worse than waste our time and energy, in that we reap discouragement and lose heart. This is too much forgotten in schools and colleges. Boys and girls are treated as if they were all of one pattern. It is folly to force on a child the drudgery of learning music if she has no ear for music, or the art of drawing if she has no eye for form and proportion. We frequently hear music which is only mechanical. The fingers touch the keys, but the living and interpreting soul is not there.

We remember an instance in which a wealthy merchant, whose daughter was a clever musical executant but without a soul for music, agreed to pay a hundred guineas to Rubinstein for six lessons on the piano. Seeking to test the

quality and capacity of the pupil before entering on his task, the great pianist played a part of a concerto which conveyed to the tone-poet the splash and murmur of breaking waves "What does that say to you ?" asked the master. "Nothing," replied the pupil. The master then improvised a vision of twilight with the moon climbing the sky and a labourer pausing at his cottage door arrested by the sweetness of the vesper hymn. "What does that say to you ?" asked the master. "Nothing," replied the girl. On this Rubinstein said · "My child, go and tell your father that I can teach you nothing."

Both Tennyson and Browning left the University without taking a degree. Logic and metaphysics were for them a barren quest. They were walking with the angels

Shakespeare's law for the aspirant after knowledge holds good for ever :

No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en ;  
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

One man has a taste for mathematics, another for poetry. Some excel in the acquisition, others in the study of history. One man is endowed with a passion for facts, another with a passion for ideas. Science attracts one mind, social questions or politics another. These varied

tastes must be duly considered if any proficiency is to be made. Love will not be spurred to that which it loathes.

### **STAND OFF FROM CONCEIT AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY**

We have written of capacity, but capacity and attainment are two different things. The capacity may be there while the attainment is contemptible.

There is no greater foe to mental culture than the assumption that you possess all adequate knowledge for the purposes of life and thought. To imagine that you know is to close the door on all future acquirement. It is a common delusion of men to imagine that they know more at the age of twenty than they realise they know when grey hairs are upon them. Nor should we judge too harshly this presuming confidence of youth in a school where buoyancy and hope are so greatly needed. It affords a gracious immunity from discouragement, while experience will soon correct the overweening confidence of ignorance.

The truly wise, however, will recognise that there is no attitude of mind so fitting as that of modesty and humility. The greatest thinkers have always been most deeply conscious of

their own ignorance. Beholding a wider circle of light than other men, they have also beheld a wider circle of surrounding darkness. That which they have known has only convinced them of the vastness of that which remained unknown. They have been learners to the end of the chapter, as in the instance of Sir Isaac Newton, when he compared himself to a child who had only gathered a few pebbles on the shores of a boundless ocean.

The thoughtful consideration of the things worth knowing of which you are ignorant is a swift way to the humble mind. Think of the regions of knowledge which are yet unconquered and unexplored !

What of the realm of Literature, with its multitudinous array of great thinkers and anointed poets ? What of the domain of Art, with its varied presentation of the beautiful in music, painting, sculpture, architecture, for human delight and uplifting ? What of the exact Sciences, with their revelation of laws based on the everlasting reason of things—laws which Omnipotence itself cannot supersede or contravene ? What of Religion, with its faith in a holy will and an unseen order, to which it is our supreme good freely and harmoniously to adjust ourselves ? Are you so

instructed in all these things that the wings of aspiration and desire may fold themselves in the satisfaction of realised accomplishment ? We trow not !

The fact is that in the sphere of knowledge there is no finality, because the scale is infinite. We may aspire and strive after universal truth, as Goethe aspired and strove, only to die as he did, with the cry, " More light ! " upon our lips.

#### **KEEP A FREE AND OPEN MIND**

Narrowness and prejudice are, after conceit, the two greatest hindrances to the acquisition of wisdom. They are responsible for two evils : they shut out the light, and they contract the vision. They are like the slits in the walls of old castles through which the mind peeps on an invading foe, as contrasted with the ample window open to the sun and with the broad landscape at command. And, as in the case of these narrow embrasures, they are of more value in the resistance of an enemy than in the welcome of a friend.

Never be afraid of truth, but give it friendly greeting and a free entrance. Like Abraham, we do well to sit out at the door of the tent and wait for the angels.

Truth may sometimes appear in an unwelcome guise. It may assume a port and an attitude which is at first startling and repellent. But if you give it welcome it will justify itself. To be afraid of truth is to be afraid of God, for God is truth, and He is also light and love. Should truth, therefore, come your way, receive it graciously and love it freely. In the words of the greatest of the Apostles: "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good."

Keep an open mind. Goethe defined a cultured man as "one who did not think he could see the world from his own church steeple." Do not be intolerant of those who differ from you. They may be right while you are wrong. All intolerance is based on egotism. It proceeds from the assumption that you have attained the ultimate of wisdom and knowledge. An ancient Greek spoke wisely when he said, "The boxer advances with a closed fist, but the orator always with an open hand."

Keep the windows of your soul open to the light. You may alter opinions which are not fixed convictions of the mind, and by so doing only prove that you are wiser to-day than you were yesterday. In his book on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," William James says: "The safe thing is surely to recognise that all

the insights of creatures of a day like ourselves must be provisional. The wisest of thinkers is an altering being, subject to the better insight of the morrow. When larger ranges of truth open, it is surely best to open ourselves for their reception, unfettered by any previous opinions or pretensions. ‘Heartily know, when half-gods go, the gods arrive.’”

The question of Browning is appropriate with regard to those who would fetter all honest inquiry and aspiring thought.

• Shall I sit beside

Their dry wells, with white lip and filmed eye,  
While in the distance heaven is blue above  
Mountains where sleep the unsunned tarns ?

## MAKE ALL THINGS SERVE

Note the significance of familiar things. Ask the why and the wherefore of the objects you see and handle day by day. “If we cannot realise the ideal,” says one, “let us strive to idealise the real.” All that is around us is wonderful if we only ponder it. The smallest fact is as a door opening out into the infinite. The Delphic oracle said ·

Who knoweth one of my meanings,  
Is master of all I am

Sight, thought, and admiration are never profit-

less They are never truly exercised without some informing result When the mind is awake and alert all things speak to it. A latent magic and wonder underlies all things. Nothing is really commonplace. A man who sits at his breakfast table may travel into many lands as he considers the viands spread before him. All the wonders of light and heat are contained in the fire which warms him. The rippling wealth of the corn-field, the joy of harvest, and the mystery of the tender blade which pierces the heavy clod to find the light—all lurk in the loaf on his table. The daily paper he takes up may wake in his brain the rush of lightning wings as he notes its tidings whispered from afar. If his little daughter looks up to him with large, blue, wondering eyes, he may well ponder the marvel of the blending of matter and spirit revealed in that vivid glance—how the speech of a soul has rushed through those bright portals. The autumn leaves which rustle at his feet as he passes to his garden gate may be convincing preachers of his own mortality. His journey in the train or tram-car to his daily task may remind him of the confidence which a man exercises in his fellow-men when he places his life and safety in their hands And when the roar of the city falls upon his ears,

how can he fail to be impressed by the magnificence of labour, the glory of toil, and the necessity of earnest devotion to one object and one aim?

#### REGARD THE MINISTRY OF EYES AND EARS

Circumstances may deprive some of schooling and of book-learning, but none are placed in a position in which they are deprived of the means of education if their mental faculties are only alert and receptive. Towns and cities are schools to the wise.

See and hear all you can which is instructive and inspiring. Never miss an eloquent man who moves you as the thunder or the tempest. Emerson says : "Eloquence is the appropriate organ of the highest personal energy" It is to be feared that eloquence is almost a lost art. We have fallen back on a race of talkers, interesting and convincing it may be, but still only talkers "To disparage eloquence," says Lord Morley, "is to deprecate mankind" The fire which kindles enthusiasm in the listener is the supreme element of power in a speaker. It distinguishes genius from mere ability. True eloquence is "logic on fire." If it comes within five miles of you, do not miss it.

If there is a permanent picture-gallery in any place you visit, do not fail to snatch an hour for the study of the canvases which enrich it. If you tread the streets of a cathedral city, see that you linger awhile around, and within, the stately pile built by men who had great thoughts of God.

If a great concert comes your way, though your means are limited and you have to wait for an hour until the doors open, you cannot expend a shilling better than by being a listener. Great music is the best symbol and prophecy of the heaven we have not entered.

### VISIT LONDON

To those of my readers who live in the provinces, I say with all the force of which I am capable—visit London. It is, indeed, something to tread the streets of a city where you feel the pulse of six million souls throbbing through heart and brain. A man lives more, as far as feeling and impulse are concerned, in London in a month than he can live anywhere else in a year.

London is the most fascinating and attractive city in the world. We are astonished that in August, for example, when the great hive is

said to be empty, people from the country do not spend their holidays amid the stir of its multitudinous life. What an education is presented by its historic buildings and amid its priceless treasures of art! The horses of Phidias from the frieze of the Parthenon in the British Museum; the Turner Room in the National Gallery, together with the marvels of the Wallace Collection and the glories of the Tate Gallery, are alone worth a long pilgrimage to see. Then, again, how informing and inspiring is a visit to Westminster Abbey, with its memorials of Britain's mighty dead, together with "that glorious company of paupers," as they have been called, who render the "Poet's Corner" a shrine of genius. Furthermore, if the visitor will but stand on Waterloo Bridge and mark the circling sweep of buildings, domes, cupolas, and spires, which extend from St. Paul's Cathedral to the Parliament Houses, he will behold a panorama more majestic and more suggestive of boundless wealth and splendid enterprise than can be found in any other city on the globe.

"I am tired of London," a man once said to the great Dr. Johnson. "Sir," he replied, "the man who is tired of London is tired of life, for there is nothing in life which

may not be found in London" And if the City streets should at intervals become wearisome, what of the Crystal Palace, Hyde Park, Hampstead Heath, Hampton Court, and Richmond Hill!

#### COMMIT A FEW GREAT THOUGHTS TO MEMORY

As an aid to mental culture, we strongly advise our readers to commit to memory something of what they read. A few gems of thought from winsome and attractive teachers are of great value if treasured in the mind. Carlyle says: "To remember one worthy thing, how many unworthy things must a man forget!" He is always rich and moves in glorious company whose mind is peopled with ennobling thoughts and fancies. We may draw much of comfort, guidance, and inspiration, amid the shiftings of daily circumstance, from a store of goodly thoughts fixed in the memory and capable of being recalled at will.

There is no room on the walls of the chamber of the soul for impure and debasing imagery, where pure and noble thoughts and fancies are enshrined. He whose mind is thus adorned can say with Bryan Waller Procter:

All round the room my silent servants wait,—  
    My friends in every season, bright and dim,  
        Angels and seraphim  
Come down and murmur to me, sweet and low,  
And spirits of the skies all come and go  
Early and late;  
From the old world's divine and distant date,  
    From the sublimer few,  
Down to the poet who but yester-eve  
Sang sweet and made us grieve,  
All come, assembling here in order due.

### LITERARY EXPRESSION

An attempt at some form of literary expression will prove an important aid to mental culture. Bacon says : " Writing makes an exact man." Thought becomes loose and disjointed if it lacks verbal expression. It is little more than a mist and a vapour until it is crystallised in language. Language is more than the mere dress of thought, it is its body and blood. Thought is little more than a ghost wandering in the land of dreams until it is allied with speech. The fact that we think in language shows how necessary it is to thought

By thinking we do not mean abandonment to the dreams of fancy, but the putting forth of our intellectual powers with definite aim and

steady perseverance. Too often mere idle reverie is mistaken for thinking.

For reveries, (the human mind will act,) Specious in show, impossible in fact,— These flimsy webs that break as soon as wrought, Attain not to the dignity of thought.

"The habit of committing our thoughts to writing," says one, "is a powerful means of expanding the mind and producing a logical and systematic arrangement of our views and opinions. It is this which gives the writer a vast superiority, as to the accuracy and extent of his conceptions, over the mere talker. No one can ever hope to know the principles of any art or science thoroughly who does not write as well as read upon a subject"

Those who study with a view to authorship need to be reminded that to be a successful author requires native genius with high cultivation both intellectual and moral, and a mastery of language, lucid, forceful, and adapted to all the purposes of thought. To see, and to be able to describe what is seen, is the first necessity of authorship; and though this may appear simple, it is mastered only by continuous application and practice. The fact is that nothing great is easy in any realm, and least of all in the realm of literature.

### THE LABOUR OF GENIUS

We are apt to imagine that genius throws out its creations as easily and naturally as June throws out its roses. How different, however, is the fact. It is interesting to note the patient toil with which the great writer moulds and improves his creations. Carlyle, when composing, passed through the tortures of a sibyl. Goethe testifies to the labour expended in the alteration and improvement of his work. Plato revised twenty times the simple expression, "Yesterday I descended to the Piræus." Pascal wrote some of his "Provincial Letters" six or seven times. Even the genius of Shakespeare, to which we impute an almost miraculous spontaneity, extended and amended without stint of toil or time. We might naturally suppose that, beyond all other of his plays, "Hamlet," which is so largely autobiographical, would have run free from his mind. If, however, you compare the first and second editions, you will learn how this marvellous play was remodelled in many parts, how weakness was rebuked in one place, and strength and beauty added in another. This laborious industry of genius demonstrates how soul, and mind, and strength need to be

applied with all diligence if any worthy result is to be achieved.

That fine utterance of Ruskin, relating to the artist on canvas, is equally applicable to the artist in literary expression, where he pictures him as " restraining for truth's sake his exhaustless energy ; reining back for truth's sake his fiery strength ; veiling before truth the vanity of brightness ; penetrating for truth the discouragement of gloom ; ruling his restless invention with a rod of iron ; pardoning no error, no thoughtlessness, no forgetfulness ; and subduing all his powers, impulses, and imaginations to the arbitrament of a merciless justice, and the obedience of an incorruptible verity." Such has been the habit and the effort of those "serene creators of immortal things" who pass before us

In long procession calm and beautiful

### CONCENTRATION

A very important factor in mental culture is concentration. Concentration implies a steady action of the mind in a fixed direction. Without concentration nothing useful or informing can be acquired or achieved in literature, science, or art. Wandering thoughts which

bring no treasure home, castles in the air baseless as a summer cloud, dreams which are as moonbeams on the rock, are all enemies to mental culture.

If we would achieve mastery in any subject we must gather up our mental forces under the leadership of the will, compelling them to avoid distractions and to make all things subservient to the subject in hand. Every subject has a certain area or limit beyond which it is weakness to stray. When we stray we dissipate interest and energy. On the highway of knowledge we must not be mere slouching vagrants, seeing all things, but observing and mastering nothing. "The evidence of superior genius," says B. R. Haydon, "is the power of concentration." Concentration makes the genius, all learning and science depend upon it. Many are of opinion that the difference of mental power in men depends more on the possession of this faculty than on any great disparity in intellect. When one inquired of Sir Isaac Newton how he had been able to achieve his discoveries, he replied: "By always intending my mind."

A rift in the lute from which the breath escapes will spoil the music. From a leaky vessel the water will flow and be lost.

There is no royal road to concentration. This is known to all who have made any serious attempt to govern and control their mental activities. It requires faithful practice to rule our thinking. It demands the exercise of will. Yet every man can concentrate, and thus gain mental strength, generate thought, and acquire definite knowledge. To this end we must not allow things which are transitory in character, and infinitesimal in importance, to absorb attention. Concentration builds epics, masters sciences, and opens up new worlds. Browning, the creator of "The Ring and the Book"—one of the greatest of all epics—reveals the secret of its achievement in the lines therein which read :

I have thought sometimes, and thought long and hard  
I have stood before, gone round a serious thing,  
Tasked my whole mind to touch and clasp it close

#### **GRASP OPPORTUNITY, HOWEVER LIMITED**

We do not forget the limited opportunities of many of those to whom we make our appeal. Toiling from morning until night amid urgent and pressing cares, they may feel that it is as much as they can do to live and pray. and

thinking must take care of itself. They are, however, the noblest of the race who have cut their way to success through difficulties, and if a man's life has to be spent amid the dust and noise of labour, in the shop, the field, the mill, or the mine, the greater is his need of some brief excursion into some broader and richer realm for his refreshment and uplifting.

Furthermore, how much in the way of mental culture might be achieved if our youth of both sexes would only improve the opportunities they possess. If the time consumed in the study of dress, or the manlyies of the music-hall, or the reading of frothy fiction, or the stroll in the crowded street with empty and frivolous companions, were given to the society of the poets and thinkers who have left behind them for our use incalculable riches, how much that would prove of inestimable value to the mind and heart might be acquired.

Yet, further, we would say for the encouragement of those who may be painfully conscious that they have not made the best of life, and of the faculties with which they are endowed, do not despair, but rise and grasp the opportunity which still remains. With God, and hope, and to-morrow still remaining, you have no right to imagine that all is lost. We love

those lines on opportunity, from the pen of Walter Malone, which read :

They do me wrong who say I come no more  
When once I knock and fail to find you in ;  
For every day I stand outside your door,  
And bid you wake and rise to fight and win  
Wail not for precious chances passed away,  
Weep not for golden ages on the wane ;  
Each night I burn the records of the day,  
At sunrise every soul is born again.

# **MENTAL CULTURE AND THE WORLD OF NATURE**



## CHAPTER IV

### MENTAL CULTURE AND THE WORLD OF NATURE

Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife  
Come, hear the woodland linnet,  
How sweet his music! on my life  
There's more of wisdom in it

O, hark! how blithe the throstle sings!  
He too, is no mean preacher  
Come forth into the light of things,  
Let Nature be your teacher

She has a world of ready wealth,  
Our minds and hearts to bless—  
Spontaneous wisdom breathed by health,  
Truth breathed by cheerfulness

Enough of science and of art,  
Close up those barren leaves,  
Come forth and bring with you a heart  
That watches and receives

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The sunlight puts out the words of the printed books as it  
puts out the fire, the very grass blades confound the wise

RICHARD JEFFERIES

It is too often supposed that books and men  
are the only sources of mental culture, but the  
earth from which we sprang, and which we daily  
tread, is the first school for the illumination  
and expansion of the mind. Intimately related  
to the human spirit, it is Nature which first

awakens in us the faculty of thought, and furnishes the language in which we utter it. What we call language is merely a succession of images taken from the world of Nature. Every appearance in Nature corresponds to some state of the mind, and that state of mind can only be expressed by presenting that natural appearance as its picture. The Chinese language is made up of little else than a series of minute pictures from the natural world. And it is Nature which in our more complex tongue furnishes us with symbols for the expression of our thoughts. The hills and the streams, the winds and the clouds, morning and evening, calm and tempest, sun and shadow, are all pressed into this service. Our life we compare to a river, our death to the fall of a leaf, our resurrection to the insect waking from sleep. The sunshine symbolises our joy, the tempest our passion, the summer lake our calm. The seasons in their change express the pathetic mutations of our life.

How finely this is expressed by Bailey in his "Festus" !

We women have four seasons like the year :  
Our Spring is in our lightsome girlish days,  
When the heart laughs within us for sheer joy ;  
Summer is when we love and are beloved ,

Autumn when some young thing with tiny hands  
And rosy cheeks and flossy, tendrilled locks,  
Is wantoning about us day and night ;  
And Winter is when those we love have perished,  
For the heart ices then  
Some miss one season, some another ; this  
Shall have them early ; and that, late.

### THE CALL OF NATURE

The messages which stir and inform us come not only from the tumult of towns, but from the tranquillity of the fields. The beginning of all wisdom and the root of all culture is to love the things which we see around us—the earth, and the sea, and the stars, and the hues and forms of flowers, and twilight on the hills, and the song of birds, and the quick glancing life of animals. Our intimate association with these things was not fully known until Darwin taught us how Nature has climbed up to man in that process of evolution, ordained and directed by divine wisdom, the study of which fills us with awe and wonder.

If a man is to grow in sympathy, tenderness, and unselfishness, if he is to attain a soul broad, intense, and aspiring, Nature and the things which live and move in Nature will have to be his teachers. If he is ever to attain moral and spiritual uplifting, Nature and the beauty of

God, which ripples up through its forms and appearances, must be among his foremost inspirers and guides

It is good to break away from the noises of life, and the daily struggle and conflict with the world, and get back to the great serene heart of Nature—

The silence that is in the starry sky,  
The sleep that is among the lonely hills

It is good to fall back on the bosom of the Eternal Mother, whose lullaby is the song of streams and the ocean's stately psalm, and whose energy is the pulse-beat of the Infinite ; to lie there and forget our sins and sorrows, our narrow hopes and fears, and be made one with the majesty and the mystery of things.

The wonder of the forest's cloistered magnificence whose choristers are happy birds ; the charm and restfulness of the meadow's undulating greenness ; the mystery, the movement, and the psalm of the sea ; the sleeping silver of the mountain tarn ; the " broad, open eye of the solitary sky " — these things have lessons not less precious than the lore of sages, and enlarge the souls which respond to their greatness.

The call of Nature to the children of men is richly voiced in those lines from W. E Henley :

Out of the sound of the ebb and flow,  
Out of sight of lamp and star,  
It calls you where the good winds blow,  
Where the unchanging meadows are,  
From faded hopes, and hopes agleam,  
It calls you, calls you night and day,  
Beyond the dark into the dream,  
Over the hills and far away

### HOLIDAYS AND THE BEAUTY IN NATURE

Dwelling thus on the benefits derived from the visions of the beauteous world, we have something to say to young people on the matter of holidays. Thousands of our toiling population living in dusky towns or cities, where buildings grow black with grime and moisture, and monotonous streets present their vistas of depressing dreariness, spend as much money in places such as Margate, Bognor, Skegness, and Blackpool, as would take them to some of the fairest portions of Great Britain, transport them to the fiords and cataracts of Norway, or enable them to traverse at least one-half of glorious Switzerland

Confining our attention, however, to the United Kingdom, how many spots there are, seldom visited by our toilers, which are as beautiful as if they had been broken off unstained and unflawed from Paradise!

Among these we may mention Ramsey and Port Erin in the Isle of Man ; the Matlock Peak district, from Buxton to Ambergate ; the dales of Yorkshire, together with Bolton Abbey and Fountain's Abbey ; the coast of Devon with Ilfracombe, Lynton, Lynmouth and Clovelly , the Chepstow district with Tintern Abbey, and the curves and reaches of the peerless Wye ; the English Lake district with its sheeted silver of Windermere, Grasmere, and Derwentwater ; the romantic region of North Wales, with Llangollen and the valley of the " wizard Dee," Barmouth and its glorious estuary, flanked by the shelving precipices of Cader, and the drive from Bettws to Llanberis in Snowdonia ; Scotland with its fair capital throned on her crags, together with Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine , Arran, Oban, Loch Maree, and the passionate pinnacles of Skye , and last, but fairer than all the rest, Ireland, with the thunder of the Atlantic sounding on the dark cliffs of Donegal, and the positively matchless emerald loveliness of Killarney

From visions such as these beauty passes into the soul, lending it a portion of its own essence, and pictures are printed on the brain which live and glow amid the monotony of daily toil and the smoke and stir of cities.

What matter though we possess no foot of land, or garden in the wide expanse—

The earth, our myriad-bosomed nurse,  
The whole miraculous universe,  
Belongs to him who loves it.

### THE LOVELINESS OF COMMON THINGS

A charming feature with regard to Nature study is the fact that in her simplest forms she is divinely beautiful. We do not need a hothouse stocked with rare tropical plants to find what is exquisite and wonderful, a walk in any English lane may prove an apocalypse if we have but eyes to see and minds to appreciate what we see. How frequently a walk across the fields to any village whose spire points heavenward through the trees recalls the inspired lines of Alexander Smith :

Daisies are white upon the churchyard sod,  
Sweet tears, the clouds lean down and give.  
The world is very lovely O, my God,  
I thank Thee that I live

If we only think of it, we shall find that each wayside flower has a dainty personality, and a bright peculiar reference. These darlings of Nature, like notes in a fine symphony, have each a special tone and a unique suggestiveness. They all contribute to complete and swell that

music of creation which is the continued vibration of the melody chanted when at the birth of her beauty "the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy."

Not only in April-time, which Leigh Hunt praised as "the season at which new flowers and new thoughts spring forth upon the earth and in the mind," or in summer-time, when the abounding flush of floral beauty suffuses her face, is Nature lovely, but winter also has its special charm. Then the moon rides high and the stars sparkle with a clearer radiance, streams and ponds appear which during summer were hidden, the structure of the trees in the charm of their bared and interlacing branches awakens a new wonder, and if, perchance, snow or frost has silvered their tracery against the sombre sky, a new marvel is revealed which delights the mind. A descending veil of silent snow is another miracle of pure beauty which an angel might pause in his flight through space to contemplate.

#### A DEFECT IN EDUCATION

The school-master is abroad, and we are thankful that it is so, thankful that the key of knowledge is placed in the hands of the poor man's lad, and that he is endowed with the

opportunity of developing the best that is in him Our methods of education are, however, very faulty in this matter of awakening in the mind of the growing boy some sense of the loveliness of the world he treads.

Many of the lessons learnt at school are of an uninteresting and useless kind, and even where they are useful they should be supplemented by that which would create interest and delight in the wonderful and varied life of the natural world The opportunities for healthy and rational recreation are far too limited, and there are few, if any, that can vie in interest and attractiveness with the study of Nature in all the changes of the varied year.

John Ruskin—one of our very noblest teachers—insists upon æsthetic training as absolutely necessary for human development He holds that education in beauty stands first alike in importance and in time. Primarily “in the beauty of gentle human faces round a child,” and after that in the fields.

“Without these,” he says, “no one can be educated humanly He may be made a calculating machine—a walking dictionary—a painter of dead bodies—a twanger or scratcher on keys or catgut—a discoverer of new forms of worms in mud But a properly so-called human being—never.”

He advocates, with reiterated and fervid eloquence, the importance, the vital need of training children through intercourse with Nature. He declares that "a quiet glade of forest, or a nook of a lake shore, are worth all the school-rooms in Christendom."

This is a bold statement; but there can be no question that some of the hours spent by children at the desk would be far more profitable if they were spent in the meadows, with a suitable guide, one who knew something of the beauty, the mystery, and the meaning of grasses, weeds, and flowers, together with the flight and song of birds and the wonders of animal life. There is deep truth in Landor's line—

We are what suns and winds and water make us.

This ignoring of the glorious volume of Nature in our elementary schools, and especially in those of our rural districts, is a grave mistake on the part of both teachers and managers. How can it be excused in those who have read those lines of Nature's great interpreter—William Wordsworth?

I know that Nature never did betray  
The heart that loved her 'Tis her privilege,  
Through all the years of this our life, to lead  
From joy to joy, for she can so inform  
The mind that is within us, so impress

With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,  
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
Our cheerful faith that all which we behold  
Is full of blessings.

### NATURE AS A TEACHER

Nature is the great instructor in both art and science. Science studies Nature in her mechanism, art in her beauty. To the one she appears as a machine, infinite in complexity, perfect in the adjustment and mutual utility of all its parts; to the other she is a picture, infinite in variety, and everywhere perfect in its loveliness. Each of these aspects of Nature, the useful and the beautiful, offers so vast a field of study that a fragment of either of them, if thoroughly mastered, might occupy the mind of a man for untold ages of his immortal life.

For the expansion and improvement of your mind, therefore, cultivate your relation with hills and streams, winds and clouds, morning and evening, the beauty of flowers and the song of birds. Literature is very ancient, but Nature is older far. Words are wonderful, but the life of things around you is more than words.

Words are petrifactions, but leaves are tongues which utter wisdom, and there are "books in the running brooks" Therefore—

Look upon the hills with tenderness,  
And make dear friendships with the streams and groves

We need to know Nature better, we need to be with her more, to love her more because we find her worthy of our love, if we are to be delivered from our absurd conventions and prejudices, to be emancipated from the slaveries of commerce and the lust of gold, to conquer the trivial and the mercenary in life, to drink in divine wisdom, and to enjoy the brotherhood of poets and of angels

There is profound wisdom in the prayer of Matthew Arnold :

Teach me your mood, O patient stars,  
Who climb each night the ancient sky,  
Leaving on space no shade, no scars,  
Nor trace of age, nor fear to die

#### **NATURE'S WITNESS TO GOD**

Not the least of the advantages derived from the study of Nature is her witness for God. Beautiful are those words of Thomas Carlyle : "Through every star, through every grass-blade, and most through every living soul, the glory

of a present God still beams. But Nature, which is the time-vesture of God, reveals Him to the wise, hides Him from the foolish."

Nature is but the name for an effect  
Whose cause is God

"The worlds were made by Him, yea, all the host of them by the breath of His mouth!" By Him the mighty fabric is momently sustained which else would vanish like the breaking bubble on the wave. The laws, the harmonies, and the forms of Nature are but the modes of His activity, and the turns of His thought. Every whisper of the secret wind which bloweth where it listeth; every colour of the dawning or the dying light; every aspect of the changing seasons; all the mysteries of electricity, gravitation, and vital growth, are of God.

Not a flower  
But shows some touch in freckle, streak, or stain,  
Of His unrivalled pencil He inspires  
Their balmy odours and imparts their hues,  
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,  
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth  
Happy who walks with Him!

. There is a potent witness for God in the order and the loveliness of Nature. If the eye of the painter and the heart of the poet respond

to the beauty of creation, that beauty represents the thought and the handiwork of a far greater Artist and Poet. Natural beauty bears all the tokens of the most tender thought and the most elaborate design; and the production of beauty so transcendent, passing from the grace of the lily and the rich plumage of the king-fisher, to the splendour of the midnight sky, surely indicates a mind of inconceivable wealth and grandeur, ordering and controlling all things.

All things are beautiful  
Because of something lovelier than themselves  
Which breathes within them and will never die.

### OBSERVE AND MEDITATE

We continually miss the instructive and the beautiful in the creation beneath us, around us, and above us, through the lack of observation and reflection. Nature unfolds her pageant for us wherever we wander, but we are not awake to her meaning and her charm. We do not bring to her what Wordsworth did, to whom she whispered so many of her finer secrets—

A watchful heart  
Still couchant, an inevitable ear,  
(And an eye practised like a blind man's touch.

The windows of the sky are open day and night, but we are busy indoors and do not look out on the ever-present glory. The spring-tide glistens at our feet with its gift of grass and flowers, and sweet rebuke of our selfishness and unrest, but we do not learn its lesson. The still, starlit sky condemns our pretence and vulgarity, our trickeries and deceits, but we are blind to its high teaching. We do not ponder the "ever-returning miracle of the sunrise," or recognise that when night comes she should "bring us as many thoughts as she wears stars" • We miss the significance of what we lightly and presumptuously call "common things," such as the leaves, the grass, and the bracken, when all the while they are marvels of grace and loveliness, suggesting tender thoughts of Him who has "made everything beautiful in His time" Not without reason has the greatest of all teachers invited us to "*Consider* the lilies of the field," and deduce from the mystery of their growth and the message of their purity sacred wisdom.

How few of the miracles spread at our feet enter into "the eye and prospect of the soul"! It would appear that the sage spake truly when he said. "To see•is a divine act" How rare is that open-eyed observation which makes the

mind a mirror of all things, on which the vision does not merely flash and pass, but linger! Some have eyes which are as glass, dead, and unconnected with the soul which wonders. Others see and do not perceive. We have again and again witnessed the baffling spectacle of young men and women reading yellow-bound novels on the lakes of Scotland and amid the glories of the Alps of Switzerland. How true it is that "people see only as much as they take with them the power to see." All depends on our fidelity to the best that is in us. Well may the poet ask of such as are blind to the loveliness of earth and sky, and to the wisdom they are able to impart, who behold the ocean with indifference and the Queen of Night, with all her virgin stars about her, without wonder.

Oh, how canst thou renounce the boundless store  
Of charms which Nature to her votary yields?  
The warbling songsters, the resounding shore,  
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields;  
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,  
And all that echoes to the song of even,  
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,  
And all the dread magnificence of heaven—  
Oh, how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven?

THE PLACE OF POETRY  
IN MENTAL CULTURE



## CHAPTER V

### THE PLACE OF POETRY IN MENTAL CULTURE

Fervency, freedom, fluency of thought,  
Harmony, strength, words exquisitely wrought,  
Fancy that from the bow that spans the sky  
Brings colours dipp'd in heaven that cannot die,  
A soul exalted above earth, a mind  
Skill'd in the characters that form mankind

COWPER

Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge, it is  
the impassioned expression which is the countenance of all  
science

WORDSWORTH.

IT IS without question that we find in reading one of the most fruitful aids to mental culture. Books, which are the best heart's-blood of great men "embalmed for a life beyond life," are among our finest educators. Many of the youth in our midst sigh for a University education, but the grandest University is a well-selected library, such as may be purchased to-day for less than some young men spend yearly in cigarettes.

Dr Johnson spent three years at Oxford, but it was to books that he attributed his success in life. He advises young people never to be

without a book in their pocket, to be read at by-times when they have nothing else to do, and adds : " It has been by that means that all my knowledge has been gained, except what I have picked up by running about the world with my wits ready to observe and my tongue ready to talk." There are thousands, and the present writer among them, who can bear the same testimony

Books are a guide to youth, a feast to manhood, and an entertainment to age. They spread before us—

The most daintie paradise on ground  
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,  
And none doth other's happiness envie

Few are, in the proper sense of the word, thinkers ; but in this golden age of opportunity all can read, and thus all possess the magic key which admits them into the glorious palace of our unrivalled literature.

All that they need is the selecting mind which avoids the trivial, the enervating, and the unclean.

Food for the mind is as necessary as food for the body, and in the mental sphere we need the food which will strengthen, refine, and elevate. Too little attention is directed to that which

is really profitable in the realm of literature. Every poor book we read consumes the time which might be spent in reading one which is really helpful. There is no more dangerous fallacy than that which assumes that it does not really matter what the character of our reading is as long as we read something. Strength comes from wholesome food. Husks can only produce a feeble and emaciated manhood, or womanhood, as the case may be. An evil book may taint and poison a man's whole being. There are papers and books now printed about which you feel, as Russell Lowell says, as if you ought to be sprinkled with some disinfecting fluid after reading them.

But what alchemy can disinfect the polluted mind? There are some of us who would give all we possess if we could get rid of the taint which certain books, read in the age of ignorance and inexperience, have given to our minds. They have destroyed the sweet, fresh bloom of innocence in the soul for ever.

Say not, "It matters not what men may think,  
But 'tis the deed avails" As flower to seed  
Is deed to thought, and as the seed foretells  
Hemlock or rose, thoughts tell the coming deed

In his advice to girls, Theodore Parker says ·  
"Cultivate your minds, shun frivolous reading,

avoid poor, weak, silly books. Read for knowledge some hard book which demands attention, memory, thought. Read also for beauty, what feeds the imagination, fills it with handsome shapes, and inspires noble thoughts. There are poets of all ages who can do this." It is of these same poets that we now treat.

### THE INFORMING POWER OF POETRY

There are some who affirm that the power of poetry is broken and that its influence is dead. "We live," they say, "in a practical age, and have no need of poetry, which is ideal and not practical. The poet makes nothing and proves nothing, therefore he has no message for us. Poetry is a mere luxury of the mind, alien from the demands of our working life—a mere survival from more primitive times. We have outgrown it and can dispense with it."

Thus, to use a fine phrase, "covenant is broken with the mighty dead," and the splendid faculty of imagination is ruled out of court. Physical sciences and material agencies are to dominate the world of thought. The intellect must deal with handicrafts, with steam, with radium, with electricity, with magnetism, with aeroplanes, with Dreadnoughts, with manufactures, with exports and imports and the currency

and the channels of trade. In the vision of such a civilisation the poet may well exclaim :

When science from creation's face  
Enchantment's veil withdraws,  
What lovely visions yield their place  
To cold material laws !

Let us pause amid these triumphs of materialism to remember that in poetry we find the embodiment of the highest wisdom and the deepest feeling of the race. The age which tells us that poetry must be abandoned as effete and useless would close our Saxon Bible and bury in the dust the might and mirth of Shakespeare and the lofty song of Milton.

Writing of the poets, Thomas Hood says : "Infirm health and a natural love of reading threw me in early life into their company. They were my interpreters in the house Beautiful of God, and my guides among the delectable mountains of Nature. They reformed my prejudices, chastened my passions, tempered my heart, purified my tastes, elevated my mind, and directed my aspirations. These bright intelligences called my mental world out of darkness like a new Creation, and gave it two great lights, *memory* and *hope*, the past for a moon and the future for a sun."

Poetry is like the mystic ladder of the patriarch's dream Its base rests on the earth, its crest is lost in the shadowy splendour of the empyrean ; while its mighty masters are the angels ascending and descending the shining rounds and maintaining our intercourse with heaven. Some may pretend to despise it, but it cannot die, for

The thirst that from the soul doth rise  
Doth ask a drink divine.

Poesy speaks not with one voice only, but with a multitude of voices. It commands the harp of Nature with all its chords and diverse harmonies, from the thunder echoed by the joyous Alps down to the whisper

As gentle  
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,  
Not wagging his sweet head

It masters every key of creation's wondrous organ, from

Those trumpet notes of harmony that shake  
Our shores in England, from those loftiest notes,  
Down to the low and wren-like warblings, made  
For cottagers and spinners at the wheel,  
And sunburnt travellers, resting their tired limbs,  
Stretched under wayside hedge-rows, ballad tunes,  
Food for the hungry ears of little ones,  
And of old men who have survived their joys

It is as an inspired thinker, and not as a mere dreamer, that the true poet secures his sovereignty over the minds of men. A wise critic says on this point. "Vulgarly considered deficient in the reasoning faculty, the true poet is remarkable rather for having it in excess. He jumps the middle terms of his syllogisms, it is true, and assumes premises to which the world has not yet arrived, but time stamps his conclusions as invincible."

Milton styles the Greek Tragic poets :

In chorus or iambic, teachers best,  
Of moral prudence, with delight received  
In brief sententious precepts, while they treat  
Of fate, and chance, and change in human life,  
High actions and high passions best describing

Ruskin tells us that poets of the first order are "men who feel strongly, think strongly, and see truly." Dean Trench says : "The loftiest poetry is not merely passion and imagination, but these moving in the sphere of highest truth" Shelley in his "Defence of Poetry" asks. "What were virtue, love, patriotism, friendship, what were the scenery of this beautiful universe which we inhabit; what were our consolations on this side the grave, and what our aspirations beyond it, if poetry did not ascend to bring light and fire from those eternal

regions where the owl-winged faculty of calculation dare not ever soar ? ”

The language of imagination is the native language of man, and all that is highest in divine or human thought is expressed in its terms and by its images. When God Himself speaks to the world, it is not in the language of argument or law, but in the deep, impassioned strains of the imagination. It is thus He addresses Job out of the whirlwind in the grandest utterances of all literature, thus do the Hebrew prophets speak to us from beneath the wings of the Eternal, and the voice of David is a song.

So through the ages our grandest teachers, from Homer, the bard of the heroic age, to Tennyson, the interpreter of our own, have spoken to us through the inspired medium of poesy. “ With this key,” says Wordsworth,

With this key,  
Shakespeare unlocked his heart: the melody  
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch’s wound;  
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;  
With it Camoens soothed an exile’s grief,  
The sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf  
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned  
His visionary brow a glow-worm lamp,  
It cheered mild Spenser, called from faery land  
To struggle with dark ways, and, when a damp

Tell round the path of Milton, in his hand  
The thing became a trumpet, whence he blew  
Soul-animating strains—alas! too few!

This is a noble list of names, and how many more might be added, reminding us of our debt to those "serene creators of immortal things" whose works have scattered our darkness, peopled our solitude, and arched our sorrows with hope's rainbow!

The poet in his singing ecstasy is the most winsome and enchanting minister of truth to the mind and heart of the people. He has journeyed for them into regions which no other feet have trod. From the devouring Inferno lurid with consuming fires he leads them upward through Purgatory to the Paradise of God. Because he listens, the oracle of Apollo is not dumb, or the trumpets of mighty angels silent. Many dismiss him as a dreamer and of no consequence, forgetting that

The song that nerves a nation's heart  
Is in itself a deed.

### **WHAT IS GREAT POETRY?**

Great poetry may be defined as deep feeling crushed into the mould of virile thought, and set to measures of winsome and delightful music. It does not owe its charm, as Mr Alfred Austin

would seem to teach, to its music alone, or yet to its clearness and lucidity of utterance. There must be thought-stuff in it, or it is merely the lilting of a mellow-throated bird. It is true that feeling and passion are a part of the essence of its life, but it must also throb with reality and virile thought. High thought, according and harmonising as it does with that hidden soul of music which pervades the universe, from the song of the stars to the lisp of the leaves and the ripple of the rain, naturally finds rhythmical expression. Take the finest passages of Milton or of Shakespeare and put them into prose, and you have broken the arch and dimmed the colours of the rainbow. You have destroyed the curve of the falling wave and silenced the splash of plaintive music with which it faints and dies upon the shore.

Take an instance from that master of resonant word-melody, John Milton. You may translate one of his great passages into prose thus: "Satan finished his daring speech, and his fallen legions, roused by his fervid eloquence, drew their swords and raged against God. The flash of their gleaming blades lit up the glooms of Hell. Then they struck their brazen shields with the trenchant steel and defied the majesty of heaven." None can deny that there is a picture

here, and a mighty one. The literal facts are in themselves impressive. Note, however, how they are transfigured and sublimed by the mighty lines, set to immortal music, in which the poet himself expresses them :

He spake and to confirm his words, out flew  
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs  
Of mighty Cherubim, the sudden blaze  
Far round illumined Hell Highly they rag'd  
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms,  
Clash'd on their sounding shields the din of war,  
Hurling defiance toward the vault of heaven

Let no one fear lest the great utterances of the great poets will ever be outworn or perish. Physical science has its own appointed sphere, and we rejoice in its hard-won triumphs. Art has its own peculiar glory, and we delight in its creations. But the anointed poet is the greatest of the sons of men, and his work will endure when the science of to-day is eclipsed by the science of to-morrow, and when the proudest creations of art have faded and crumbled.

#### SOME ELEMENTS OF POETIC TEACHING

The charm of the poet as a teacher is made up of many elements One of these consists of the fact that he is a master, moulder, and vivifier of language.

There is a legend to the effect that when Christ was in His childhood some of His companions fashioned some birds out of clay, and that by His miraculous power He touched them and gave them life, with power to soar and sing. It is certain that at the poet's touch dead words are quickened into life and song. The voice of the poet is the voice of life. His words haunt the ear and fascinate the soul. We hang "o'er the fine pants and trembles" of his lines. As one of his gifted race has said :

The Sculptor has fair marbles at his feet,  
 The Painter has the miracles of Tyre,  
 The Poet has the soiled words of the street,  
 And robes them with imperishable fire

"The thought of the poet," says Emerson, "is so passionate and alive that, like the spirit of a plant or an animal, it has an architecture of its own, and adorns nature with a new thing." The lyrics of Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley, and Tennyson afford abundant examples of this subtle and entrancing magic.

This word-melody of the poet is of inestimable value to any student in the formation of a literary style. Writing of that eminent French prose-master, Joseph de Maistre, Lord Morley says : "One element of his education he commemorates in a letter to his favourite daughter.

## THE PLACE OF POETRY

'Let your brother,' he says, 'work hard at the French Poets Let him learn them by heart, especially the incomparable Racine. Never mind whether he understands them or not. I did not understand him when my mother used to come repeating his verses at my bedside, and lulled me to sleep with her fine voice to the sound of that inimitable music I knew hundreds of lines long before I knew how to read; and it is thus that my ears, accustomed betimes to this ambrosia, have never since been able to endure any sourer draught.' "

The same music may be found by any British reader in Tennyson or Shelley, and if mastered it will make a slovenly style impossible. Verbal discord will be distasteful after the mastery of such subtle and engaging melody

## THE POET'S MISSION

It is the mission of the poet to express in words which are music as well as speech truths which gladden and uplift.

A sensitive being, a creative soul, the poet stands in the presence of the beautiful, alike in Nature and in Art, and interprets it to the souls of others not so keenly susceptible of its influence.

He sees with the penetrating eye of genius,  
with that faculty of imagination which

In truth,  
Is but another name for absolute power,  
And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,  
And reason in her most exalted mood

Instead of form, colour, and melodious sound, as in the case of the sculptor, the painter, and the musician, the poet uses language as the medium through which he conveys impressions of love, and truth, and beauty, without the intervention of any outward image. And because the capabilities of language are more varied, more searching, and more exhaustless than those of the chisel, the pencil, or even the musical note, the poet is the supreme artist. He combines the objective permanence of the plastic or pictorial arts with the successive development which belongs to music, and he can reach at will the inmost feelings and sympathies of men through

Thoughts that voluntary move  
Harmonious numbers

There is no art in which the poet does not excel, no picture, or sculpture, or fairy palace which he cannot rival, though it is the "mind's-eye" to which he makes his appeal.

A few descriptive passages from Shakespeare, the greatest of all poets, will go far to prove our statement.

Is it a stream by which you love to wander ?  
Then mark how his ideal brook

Makes sweetest music with th' enamel'd stones,  
Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge  
He overtaketh in his pilgrimage.

Is it fair flowers in which you find delight ?  
Then note his •

Daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March with beauty , violets, dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
Or Cytherea's breath

Does marble chastity attract you ? Then behold

The noble sister of Publicola,  
The moon of Rome , chaste as the icicle,  
That's curded by the frost from purest snow,  
And hangs on Dian's temple

Would you intrude where beauty sleeps, and tremble before its witching spell ? Then bend with Iachimo over the slumbering Imogen, and catch his whispered tribute, awe-inspired :

'Tis her breathing that  
Perfumes the chamber thus the flame o' the taper  
Bows toward her, and would underpeep her lids,  
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied

Under these windows, white and azure, laced  
With blue of heaven's own tinct . . .

On her left breast  
A mole cinque-spotted, like the crimson drops  
I' the bottom of a cowslip

Is it an Eastern picture you desire ? Then  
mark the shallop in which the dusky Cleopatra  
floats, that "serpent of old Nile".

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,  
Burn'd on the water · the poop was beaten gold ;  
Purple the sails, and so perfumed, that  
The winds were love-sick with them : the oars were  
silver ;

Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made  
The water which they beat to follow faster,  
As amorous of their strokes

### THE POET AS AN IMAGE-MAKER

The charm of the poet as a teacher is greatly enhanced by his skill as an image-maker. This is implied in that very term *imagination*, which is the poet's transcendent quality. All men have a measure of imagination, but the great poet "is of imagination all compact." He excels in that faculty of representation by which the mind keeps before it, in its working, images of visible forms which it uses to express its thoughts, giving to abstract ideas a concrete utterance. When he utters a thought he also adds a picture which makes it vivid and invests

it with an unspeakable charm. To imagine in the true sense of the word is to image forth, to fix and realise the ideal, to make abstract truth express itself in the forms of visible nature, to represent the invisible by the visible, the infinite by the finite. Thus, to quote from the prince of poets :

As imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothings  
A local habitation and a name

A language rich in imagery is in itself a proof of the possession of poetical faculty in a high degree.

Take Shakespeare, in whom imagery wedded with profoundest thought is a conspicuous and magically illuminative element.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude

• • • •  
O, how this spring of love resembleth  
The uncertain glory of an April day

• • • •  
How far that little candle throws its beams !  
So shines a good deed in a naughty world

• • • •  
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night  
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain-tops.

My May of life  
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf

This quality of image-making, so prominent in Shakespeare, is also a striking feature in all other poets whose works maintain their mastery over the human mind. In Milton it appears in attributes as colossal as his daring theme where he portrays the revolt of mighty angels, and the wreck of Paradise. We find it in the following glimpse of Satan armed for battle :

The superior Fiend

Was moving toward the shore, his ponderous shield  
Behind him cast ; the broad circumference  
Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb  
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views  
At evening from the top of Fesole . . .  
His spear, to equal which the tallest pine  
Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast  
Of some great admiral, were but a wand,  
He walk'd with, to support uneasy steps  
Over the burning marle.

Then we behold on Hell's inflamed sea :

His legions, angel forms, who lay intranc'd  
Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks  
In Vallombrosa . . . So thick bestrown,  
Abject and lost lay these, covering the flood,  
Under amazement of their hideous change.

Then we have a vision of titanic war, where Satan and his host cope with Gabriel and his warrior-angels :

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright  
 Turn'd fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns  
 Their phalanx, and began to hem him round  
 With parted spears, as thick as when a field  
 Of ceres, ripe for harvest, waving bends  
 Her bearded grove of ears, which way the wind  
 Sways them . . . On the other side, Satan  
 alarmed,  
 Collecting all his might, dilated stood,  
 Like Teneriffe, or Atlas, unremoved  
 His stature reached the sky, and on his crest  
 Sat horror plumed

Then, in meeker guise, from Alexander Smith, we have the following suggestive images :

I love thee, Poesy ! thou art a rock,  
 I, a weak wave, would break on thee and die.

. . . . .  
 The waves of night break on a strand of stars

. . . . .  
 The wildered city's like a demon's brain,  
 The children of the night its evil thoughts.

. . . . .  
 'Tis not for me  
 To fling a poem, like a comet, out,  
 Far-splendouring the sleepy realms of Night.

Then again from Shelley :

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A pard-like spirit beautiful and swift.

That orbed maiden, with white fire laden,  
Whom mortals call the moon.

Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
Stains the white radiance of eternity.

Then again from Tennyson :

The tides of music's golden sea  
Setting toward eternity.

I saw that in the morning far withdrawn,  
God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

O Love, O fire ! once he drew  
With one long kiss my whole soul through  
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

She did not weep,  
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy mist  
Like that which kept the heart of Eden green  
Before the useful trouble of the rain.

And, lastly, from Keats, in a passage on  
Human Life, where images lie thick as shells  
on ocean sands :

Stop and consider ! Life is but a day ;  
A fragile dew-drop on its perilous way  
From the tree's summit ; a poor Indian's sleep,  
While his boat hastens to the monstrous steep  
Of Montmorenci. Why so sad' a moan ?  
Life is the rose's hope while yet unblown ;

The reading of an ever-changing tale ;  
The light uplifting of a maiden's veil ;  
A pigeon tumbling in clear summer air ;  
A laughing schoolboy, without grief or care,  
Riding the springy branches of an elm.

Here we have seven pictures in one brief poem, seven examples of concrete, imaginative thought. It is thus the poet plays with words, charging them with ideas, expressed in images which are symbols of thought. To quote from Emerson : "The poet, like a delighted boy brings you heaps of rainbow bubbles, opaline, air-borne, spherical as the world, instead of a few drops of soap and water." With this difference, however, that while bubbles burst and vanish almost as soon as formed, the poet is a setter of emeralds and diamonds which endure.

Blessings be with them and eternal praise ! . . .  
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs  
Of truth and pure delight by heavenly lays !

### THE LORDS OF SONG

A mere cursory glance at some of the supreme poets of the world, who embody and express the genius of their age and nation, will, amply demonstrate our indebtedness to the treasures which they place at our command. To really

know Homer, Æschylus, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Goethe, Tennyson, and Browning, is to know the best which the world has thought and uttered. The man who knows Homer and Æschylus thoroughly, knows more about the Greeks than all the histories have chronicled. The man who has mastered Dante, has penetrated the profound secret of the medieval world. He who is familiar with Shakespeare can afford to ignore all other books dealing with the England of Elizabeth. He who can claim Milton as a friend has grasped all that is noble of the England of the Puritans. To walk with Wordsworth is to discern the inner secret of great Nature. Goethe presents us with the broad culture of Europe in one of the brightest of its centuries. Tennyson sums up the Victorian era with all its wealth of hope and aspiration, beauty and desire. Browning treads "the secretest walks of fame," and reads the human soul as an open book. All these are not for a race and an age, but for all races and all time—masters of the world, inheritors of immortality. Plunge deep into their writings, discern their significance, and humanity has revealed to you its secret. You may then look abroad for other worlds to conquer.

**POETRY THE GREATEST OF THE ARTS**

It is not difficult to demonstrate that poetry is the finest of all the arts. It comprehends and expresses more than any other medium by which man interprets the beautiful in Nature, thought, or life. Instead of colour as in painting, or form as in sculpture, or bulk of ordered stone as in architecture, we have language as a direct medium, free as the air and fluent as the wave, conveying impressions of love and truth, and beauty and delight of the mind, without the intervention of any outward image. The only rival of poetry in its direct appeal to the spirit is music; and the poet's speech, as the result of its metrical cadence, also partakes of the quality of song. It is, at its best,

A song divine of high and passionate thoughts  
To their own music chanted

What is loftiest in thought spontaneously seeks utterance in measured numbers. Homer, Hafiz, and Ossian sang, before "poetics" were taught or dreamed of. The sigh of the wind, the moan of the storm-swept forest, the clash and surge and whisper of the sea, were the first instructors in .

The choral harmony of Great and Fair.

The living Universe is pervaded with melody, and like an *Aeolian* harp the sensitive soul of the poet receives and transmits it.

Poetry has arrested and enshrined flashes of genius and results of deepest thought which no other Art could arrest or embody. Through perfect language it gives perfect vision. The internal harmony and beauty of the poet's soul shines through it as the moon through a filmy wreath of cloud. That which is 'dead' in sculpture lives and breathes in poesy. It moves fancy and feeling in the soul by means of words, subtly and delicately shaded, as the painter moves them by the visible tints upon the canvas, or the sculptor by the curves and lines on the marble. Stately palaces, dim cathedrals, woodland glades, joyous festivals, shining seas, and steeds scenting battle from afar, appear at the poet's imperial bidding and move obedient to his breath. To quote from Landor :

Shakespeare with majesty benign called up  
The obedient classics from their marble seats,  
And led them through dim glen and sheeny glade,  
And over precipices, over seas  
Unknown by mariner, to palaces  
High-arch'd, to festival, to dance, to joust,  
And gave them golden spur and vizor barred,  
And steeds that Pheidias had turned pale to see.  
Poetry is distinguished among the arts not

only for its variety of expression but also for its quality of enduringness. It has been said that "Time sadly overcometh all things," but poesy defies the crumbling touches of old time. The fair colours on the canvas of Apelles have faded and every nymph has vanished from his glades, but the Helen of Homer stands as fair as when

She drew the dreaming keels of Greece  
After her over the Ionian foam

The statue of the Olympian Jove which fronted the Ægean Sea has been trampled into dust, but the Prometheus of Æschylus and the Electra of Sophocles still survive. Mocking the toil of sculptor and of architect, Time, in titanic sport, has torn down mighty pillars from the Parthenon and left the blocks of finest marble on the grass like cards shuffled and flung from a careless hand, but the Palace of Art which Tennyson built for our delight with its splash of cooling fountains and its silvery chime of bells, and its stately colonnades glowing in the sun or steeped in moonlight quietness, stands all unflawed and perfect, "Seeing"—as its creator himself avows—

Seeing it was built  
To music, therefore never built at all,  
And therefore built for ever.

## THE MIND AND ITS CULTURE

### STUDIES IN THE POETS FOR GENERAL READERS

Because we are specially anxious to save the lowliest reader from discouragement, we shall divide the books we recommend into two sections. -The first section may be mastered by all who are really interested in the best literature, while the second is better adapted to those who have ample leisure and who may be regarded as students inspired by a serious purpose to know all of the best which has been presented by the world's master-poets

As we deal prominently with our own British poets, an initial survey of the whole field will prove very instructive. For this purpose we call attention to

Stopford Brooke: *Primer of English Literature*. Dr. Brooke's general estimate of our literature is so discerning and so accurate that we can suggest no better guide. His estimate of the makers of our literature deals largely with its poets, while his judgment of their relative value may be pronounced infallible. With the insight of true genius, he indicates what it is best worth our while to read.

Palgrave: *Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*, together with his *Treasury of Sacred*

*Song*—both rich in selections from our poets, from the Elizabethan to the Victorian era.

In these volumes we have specimens from the works of our finest singers well calculated to lead the reader on to the entire writings of those whom they most approve. With regard to these we place in the forefront for readers of limited leisure :

Shakespeare : *Tragedies*. Here we enter on the study of the first of all poets. Carlyle refers to Shakespeare as "The greatest intellect which in our recorded world has left record of himself in the way of literature." Matthew Arnold says, with deep truth :

Others abide our question, thou art free  
We ask and ask ; thou smildest and art still  
Out-topping knowledge

Milton. *Poetical Works*. "The great God-gifted organ voice of England"—TENNYSON. Let our readers begin with *Comus*, one of the most exquisite of all the poems in our language, and then climb to sublimer heights at will

George Herbert : *Temple* Religious verse, rich in thought and suggestiveness, and clothed with beauty.

Two centuries have vanished since thy day,  
And yet that venerable Temple stands  
Untouched by time, impervious to decay

GEORGE MORINE.

Wordsworth : *Shorter Poems.* "Wordsworth, the High Priest of Nature's joy"—JOHN WILSON.

From Shelley's dazzling glow or thunderous haze,  
From Byron's tempest-anger, tempest-mirth,  
Men turned to thee and found—not blast and blaze,  
Tumult of tottering heavens, but peace on earth.

WILLIAM WATSON.

Cowper : *Poems* "It was Cowper's faith in Christ that gave splendour to his career."—JUDGE WILLIS

Byron : *Childe Harold*, *Manfred*, and *Cain*  
A finer note than that of sensual passion rings out in these great creations of this erring genius.

Burns *Poems.* "The Shakespeare of lyric poetry."—J. S. BLACKIE.

Shelley . *Poems.* "Never did fancy so teem with sensuous imagery as Shelley's."—J. STUART MILL.

Coleridge : *Poems* "All that he did excellently might be bound up in twenty pages, but it should be bound in pure gold."—STOPFORD BROOKE

Keats : *Poems* Visions delicately wrought as in purest alabaster, ever convincing us of the truth he taught, that :

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever :  
Its loveliness increases ; It will never  
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep

A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing

Tennyson : *Poems* "I call him and think him the noblest of poets, the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and the most pure"—E. A. POE.

Browning · *Poems*. Complete in 2 vols. "In Tennyson and Browning we have the veritable fountain-heads of the spiritual energy of our time. 'Ranging and ringing through the minds of men,' their words are linked in many a memory with what life has held of best."—F. W. H. MYERS

E B Browning : *Poems*. Among the foremost British poets we find one woman, and one only, worthy to stand forth as their equal, and their peer, and on the pedestal which raises into view the snowy marble of her delicate and expressive form, we read the name, Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

A. A. Procter · *Legends and Lyrics*.

Jean Ingelow : *Poems*.

Christina Rossetti *Poems*.

The *Poems* of James Russell Lowell The greatest of the American poets, of whom O. W. Holmes writes :

This singer, whom we long have held so dear,  
 Was Nature's darling, shapely, strong, and fair ;  
 Of keenest wit, of judgment crystal-clear,  
 Easy of converse, courteous, debonair.

Longfellow. *Poems*. The poet of the home  
 and of the child, fresh, sweet, and pure as a  
 Spring morning :

With loving breath of all the winds his name  
 Is blown about the world                    J R LOWELL

Whittier. *Poems*. Beautiful in their human-  
 ness and lovely in their consecration to sacred  
 ends, we find in these poems the moral energy,  
 the religious trust, and the hatred of oppression,  
 which pulsed in the veins of the noble founders  
 of New England

Then, in addition to all these, there are other  
 masters of the magic and the might of song,  
 most of them of more recent date, whose voices  
 will endure for many generations. Among these  
 we may refer to the tragic pathos of Thomas  
 Hood, the suggestive wealth of Bailey in his  
*Festus*; the divine simplicity of William Blake;  
 the storied charm of William Morris; the  
 "sweetness and light" of Matthew Arnold; the  
 sea-like note of Algernon Swinburne; the  
 perfect balance of William Watson; the poign-  
 ant mastery of John Davidson; the virile  
 appeal of W. E. Henley; the patriotic glow of

Rudyard Kipling; the Miltonic echo of Robert Bridges, and, despite the voice of his detractors, the lyric grace of Alfred Austin.

All these appeal to us in our mother tongue, in measures of bewitching melody, not divorced from creative power, such as make us nobly proud of our British heritage.

#### FOR ADVANCED READERS

For those with ample leisure we add to the foregoing list the following.

J. A. Symonds : *The Greek Poets*.

Courthope : *History of English Poetry*.

Schlegel : *History of Dramatic Literature*

Van Laun : *History of French Literature*.

Gostwick and Harrison : *Outlines of German Literature*.

Taine : *History of English Literature*

*The Oxford Treasury of English Literature*  
3 vols.

Homer : *Iliad* and *Odyssey* Pope, or Chapman's, translation. Of this, the Father of Poets, Chapman writes :

None like Homer hath the world enphered,  
Earth, seas, and heaven, fixed in his verse, and  
moving;

Whom all times' wisest men have held unpeered.

*The Tragedies of Æschylus*, translated by Dean Potter “Æschylus,” says J. A. Symonds, “was essentially the Titan of ancient art. The purely creative faculty has never been exhibited on a greater scale”

*The Tragedies of Sophocles* Translation by Plumptre. “Sophocles,” says Sir Richard Jebb, “is the purest type of the Greek intellect at its best”

*The Æneid* of Virgil. Translations by Dryden and Connington. “The purest, sweetest, gentlest, best beloved among all poets.”—W C LAWTON.

Dante. *Divina Commedia* Translations by J. A. Carlyle, Longfellow, Cary, and J. W. Thomas. “The central man of all the world, as representing in perfect balance the imaginative, moral, and intellectual faculties, all at their highest.”—RUSKIN.

*The Oxford Book of English Verse* (Quiller Couch)

Chaucer: *Poems* and *Canterbury Tales*. The poet of May-time and the dewy dawn, of whom Tennyson sings, as

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath  
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill  
The spacious times of great Elizabeth  
With sounds that echo still .

Shakespeare: *Plays and Poems* A man's

intellectual growth and height may be measured by his appreciation or otherwise of this supreme master.

Spenser : *Faërie Queene and Other Poems*. For all ages the poet's poet, unrivalled for his wealth of imagery.

Marlowe and Webster : *Plays and Poems*. Mighty companions of the Imperial Bard of Avon.

Milton : *Paradise Lost*. "Nature formed Milton to be a great poet. But what other poet has shown so sincere a sense of the grandeur of his vocation, and a moral effort so constant and so sublime to make and keep himself worthy of it?"—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Herrick : *Hesperides and Noble Numbers*.

Brief thy sweet lyrics, Herrick, are,  
And polished as the bosom of a star

T. B. ALDRICH

*Poems and Plays* of Euripides, Aristophanes, Pindar, Horace, Petrarch, Tasso, Camoens, Calderon, Racine, Corneille, Molière. All these have a voice interpreting their age and country, and all have ministered instruction and delight to unnumbered minds ,

Goethe *Faust* Translation by A G Latham.  
"The greatest poet of the present age," says

Matthew Arnold, "and the greatest critic of all ages."

Schiller. *Plays and Poems* Translations by Coleridge and others. "He was a seer—a prophet We revere him as one of the first of the spiritual heroes of humanity."—FRIEDRICH VISCHER

*Poems and Plays* of Victor Hugo. Various translations The greatest poet of France. By dint of brilliant creative power, and an imagination which soared sunward like an eagle, Victor Hugo throned himself above all the literary masters of his time.

*Mahabharata and Ramayana*. The two great epics of India, condensed into English verse by Romesh C. Dutt. The eulogy of the first of these great works by Julius Eggeling is descriptive of both: "A noble work abounding in passages of remarkable descriptive power, intense pathos, and high poetic grace and beauty."

# **FORMING A LIBRARY**



## CHAPTER VI

### FORMING A LIBRARY

Books are yours  
Within whose silent chambers treasure lies  
Preserved from age to age, more precious far  
Than that accumulated store of gold  
And orient gems, which for a day of need  
The Sultan hides deep in ancestral tombs,  
These hoards of truth you can unlock at will

WORDSWORTH

Books let us into the souls of men, and lay open to us the secrets of our own. They are the first and the last, the most home-felt, the most heart-felt of our enjoyments

HAZLITT

THE kingdom of books is wide. It embraces the thought, the knowledge, and the genius of the human world. "All that men have devised, discovered, done, felt, or imagined," says Carlyle, "lies recorded in printed books; wherein whoso has learned the mystery of spelling printed letters may find and appropriate it"

Reading supplies the means through which the leisure of young people may prove a blessing and not a curse. One of its most important offices consists in the fact that it contributes to the profitable employment of time. A vacant

hour is always in danger of becoming the devil's hour. Young men and women are in imminent peril when they are utterly without occupation. To such of them as dwell in great cities, frequently only in lodgings—the evening hours bring with them an aching sense of loneliness and isolation. A lover of reading, however, has no dull or unprofitable hours. In its simplest forms, reading ministers to innocent recreation, and in its noblest, it instructs and elevates the mind. It nourishes all that is finest in young men and maidens, and is potent as a solace in the delays, defeats, and sorrows of life.

A mind of limited scope and power may be wonderfully enlarged through communion with books, and a darkened soul may be filled with sunshine. Literature has proved in all ages a precious medicine for the heart, a conqueror of care, a recreator of tired and desponding souls, a comforter of the lonely and the unfriended, and an enricher of the poor.

Books open the cottar's door for the entrance of the greatest of the race. When they are with us we walk with prophets, poets, priests, and kings, and commune with them at their best. When they are with us we are never unfriended or unhelped. We are in great company, the greatest which the world can furnish.

Cicero says: "To add a library to a house, is to give to that house a soul."

Be ours, in times of doubt or fear  
Or grovelling thought, to seek a refuge here.

The grave we rest in may be the only land we shall ever possess, but we tread a "dukedom large enough" when we walk under the ample sky with seers and poets.

#### FORMING A LIBRARY

With regard to the question of reading, we would earnestly urge on those who may peruse these pages the wisdom of forming a library. Free libraries have their advantages, and we are deeply thankful for them, but in these days of cheap books, lovers of literature should form a library of their own. It does not much matter how small it is. A few books well chosen will suffice. "The truest owner of a library," says a gifted thinker, "is he who has bought each book for the love he bears it" If book-lovers will read what they buy, and buy only what they read, they will in a few years possess priceless treasures. And it should not be forgotten that we live in an age when for a few shillings we may secure a library which the richest Doge of old Venice could not have obtained if he had spent his last ducat.

Our difficulties in this realm arise not from the lack of quantity, but from the true discrimination of quality. In the very multiplicity and variety of the volumes placed at our disposal we find our embarrassment. The question is not one of finding books in sufficient numbers, but in selecting those which inform, enrich, elevate, and gladden the mind.

In these hastening, crowded days we have no time to waste. We need, therefore, to be careful and discriminating in the choice of books.

The questions we need to ask are—First, does the book contain enough truth, beauty, or active good to make it worth reading? And, second, does the book leave any kind of pure, wholesome, or fine feeling in the mind when read? By these standards all books should be judged, and it is with these standards set clearly before us that we make the following selection for the benefit of those who seek guidance at our hands:

#### **FOR GENERAL READERS**

Carlyle's Essays : *Heroes* and *Sartor Resartus*. "No man of his generation has done so much to stimulate thought."—ALFRED H. GUERNSEY.

Emerson's Works. A brave, sweet thinker, standing aloof from sect, or clique, or party;

full of imaginative suggestiveness, -and charged with reverence for all which is beautiful and divine.

Macaulay's Essays. Remarkable alike for a fascinating eloquence, which lures you from page to page as by the spell of an enchanter, and for a wealth of information which fills you with amazement.

Lamb: *Essays of Elia* "I run no great risk in asserting that, of all English authors, Charles Lamb is the one loved most warmly and emotionally by his admirers"—AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

Hazlitt's Essays. "There is no better reading to be found than is afforded by his works. So happy a power of inspiring enthusiasm for genius, and of stimulating intellectual sympathy, has been exhibited by very few writers either of this or the last century."—ALEXANDER IRELAND.

R. L Stevenson's Essays. "His too short life has left a fairly ample store of work, not always quite equal, but charming, stimulating, distinguished, as few things in this last quarter of a century have been"—GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

Ste. Beuve's Essays. "Exquisite and instructive. Models of gracious writing. Full of ideas. The most suggestive of guides, breathing over us the happiest moods"—LORD MORLEY

Izaak Walton: *The Complete Angler* and

*Lives.* "Holds spicy place among ranks of books, as lavender keeps fresh odour among stores of linen."—D G MITCHELL

Ruskin : *Sesame and Lilies, Seven Lamps of Architecture, Stones of Venice, Unto this Last, Ethics of the Dust*

John Ruskin is one of the very noblest of our teachers. While some in temples made with hands have proclaimed "the beauty of holiness," he, in the temple made without hands, has proclaimed the holiness of beauty. His sympathy with the toiling masses is as deep as his love of Nature, and his *Sesame and Lilies* should be found on the book-shelf of every girl in the land. It is a new gospel of service set to winsome and majestic music.

Coleridge. *The Friend, Aids to Reflection, Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare.* "Coleridge, a catholic mind, with a hunger for ideas, with eyes looking before and after to the highest bards and sages, and who wrote and spoke the only high criticism in his time—is one of those who save England from the reproach of no longer possessing the capacity to appreciate what of rarest wit the island has yielded."—EMERSON.

Milton : *Areopagitica.*

Mill : *On Liberty.*

Morley : *On Compromise.*

Matthew Arnold *Essays.*

De Quincey : *Opium Eater.*

Dr. Brown : *Rab and his Friends.*

Holmes : *Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.*

Smiles : *Self-Help.*

Froude : *Essays in Literature and History.*

Trench : *Study of Words.*

Here we have a selection of about thirty volumes, nearly all of which may be purchased at a low price, containing much of the best which has been written in our language. We invite the attention of our readers to these volumes.

Only six hours a week devoted to works such as these would achieve much in a lifetime. "For evermore," says one, "it is the man who knows who gets to be the man who does, and to whom the chance for doing comes. Merely frittering newspaper and novel reading—a youth-hood devoted only to that, how pitifully sad ! No ship drifts into harbour. No young person drifts into an achieving manhood or woman-hood."

#### FOR STUDENTS

Plato · *Dialogues* Jowett's translation. Ferrier says · "All philosophic truth is Plato rightly divined." And Pope :

Go, soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere,  
To the first good, first perfect, and first fair.

Marcus Aurelius : *Meditations* “The special friend and comforter of all clear-headed and scrupulous, yet pure and upward-striving souls”  
—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

Bacon : *Essays*. “Bacon discovered new tracts of learning ; he gave directions how to pursue them, he banished hypothesis, and introduced experiment ; he is deservedly the glory of our nation, as the restorer of true philosophy.”—VICESIMUS KNOX.

Aristotle : *Selections*. Translated by Jowett  
All men are either Aristotelians or Platonists. They represent the two poles of philosophy, the practical and the ideal W. E Gladstone speaks of “The piercing sagacity of Aristotle”

Sir Thomas Browne : *Religio Medici*. “One of the most beautiful prose poems in the language”—LORD LYTTON.

Epictetus : *Discourses*. Long’s Edition “It is impossible for any person of sound mind not to be charmed by his works”—NIEBUHR.

Burton : *Anatomy of Melancholy*. “It is the only book that ever took me out of bed two hours sooner than I wished to rise”—DR. JOHNSON.

Montaigne . *Essays*. “His grasp comprehends materials for thought that it might take

a thousand sages to work up into systems. His fineness of vision seizes on subtleties of character, and mysteries in feeling, that might open new views of the human heart to a thousand poets."—LYTTON.

Cicero : *Orations*. Long's translation. "This name represents not merely an orator, but eloquence itself"—LAMARTINE.

Demosthenes : *Orations*. Kennedy's translation in Bohn's Classical Library. "He represents his country in that combination of intellectual subtlety, that union of passion with art, and that invariable insistence on the moral side of actions, that characterises most of the great spirits of Greek literature"—GILBERT MURRAY.

Burke : *Speeches and Writings*. "In energy and might, and majesty, Milton and Burke have no masters."—LORD MORLEY.

Walter Bagehot. *Literary Studies*. (3 vols.)

Sir Leslie Stephen. *Hours in a Library* (3 vols.) Authors and works such as these remind us of the glowing tribute paid by Heinsius to such elect spirits. "I no sooner come into the library, but I bolt the doors to me, excluding lust, ambition, avarice, and all such vices, whose nurse is idleness, the mother of ignorance, and melancholy herself; and in the very lap of eternity amongst so many divine souls, I take

my seat with so lofty a spirit of sweet content,  
that I pity all our great ones and rich men that  
know not this happiness”

I or every man of real learning  
Is anxious to increase his lore,  
And feels, in fact, a greater yearning,  
The more he knows, to know the more.

### HISTORY

A fruitful and most interesting theme for study is the history of nations and peoples who have either passed over the stage of the world or are still actors in the great drama of human life.

Three great gains may come to us through the study of history—wisdom, patience, and hope. History shows that God moves by evolution and not by revolution; that the conditions of life cannot be changed in an hour by the stroke of a pen, the tread of an army, or the fist of a legislature. It reveals to us the fact that we must learn not only to labour but to wait, and, more than all, it reveals to us the truth that a law of progress governs the movements of nations, and that there is “a power making for righteousness” which presides over all those movements.

The study of history disproves the idea, held by many, that the world grows worse and not

better The students of history are optimists and not pessimists To them it is plain that this is not the devil's world, but God's, and that there is

One far-off divine event  
To which the whole creation moves.

### BOOKS RELATING TO HISTORY

Such is the vastness of this subject, that since the days when Sir Walter Raleigh attempted it during his thirteen years' imprisonment in the Tower of London, very few have dared to produce a History of the World. The best effort in this direction is

*An Epitome of History: Ancient, Mediæval, and Modern*, by Professor Carl Ploetz It is translated with extensive and valuable additions by W. T. Tillinghast, of Harvard. This renders all the service that an epitome can render.

Freeman · *General Sketch of European History*.

Philip Smith : *The Ancient History of the East*.

Maspero : *The Dawn of Civilization*.

Petrie · *History of Egypt*.

Herodotus . Josephus

Sayce · *The Ancient Empires of the East*.

Bunsen : *God in History*. o

Dean Church : *The Beginning of the Middle Ages*.

Gibbon: *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

Merivale: *General History of Rome.*

Cox: *General History of Greece.*

Guizot: *History of France* (6 vols)

Menzel: *History of Germany*

Lodge: *The Student's Modern Europe*

W. Hunt: *Italy.*

Romesh C Dutt: *School History of Ancient and Modern India*

Motley *Rise of the Dutch Republic*

Henry Adams *History of the United States.*

W M Mackenzie. *Outline of Scottish History*

Gardiner: *Student's History of England*

Green *Short History of the English People*

We are tempted to dwell at length on this last book. It is such a fine record of the struggles and fortunes of our land, written with all the charm and glow of a fascinating romance. "History," wrote the author of this great book in 1869, "History (we are told by the publishers) is the most unpopular of all branches of literature in the present day; but it is only unpopular because it seems more and more to sever itself from all that can touch the heart of the people."

In this work this glaring defect of most of our histories is amended, and the subject is brought home to the heart of the English people. We witness the making of England through the

centuries—the efforts and the conflicts and the sacrifices which have made it the freest and sweetest land under the sun. Furthermore, how simply and beautifully and with what lovely interweaving of legend and story does the author delight us as we wander through the mazes of his wonderful record As a foundation-stone of general culture this book is of inestimable value.

A multitude of other volumes might be added to this list, together with other works suitable for collateral reading, including many popular historical works of fiction But a further catalogue could only generate despair, so we refrain Let our readers select that branch of history in which they are interested, and let them endeavour to think as well as read, that they may trace the hand of God in the evolution of the nations.

Much of baffling mystery confronts us in the study of history, but two things are clear—first, the dominating power of justice and righteousness, and, second, the fact that the course of the world is an ascending and not a descending one.

That man's perfection is the crowning flower  
Towards which the urgent sap in life's great tree  
Is pressing—seen in puny blossoms now,  
But on the world's great morrows to expand,  
With broadest petal and with deepest glow.

### BIOGRAPHY

Biography and history are closely connected. History is, indeed, often best studied through biography. To know the great men of any period is to know that period better than it can be learned in any other way.

Whether or not we believe, with Carlyle, that it is the great men who make history, we cannot evade the fact that they most clearly represent it in our thought. Perhaps it was not Luther who made the Reformation, perhaps it was the Reformation that made Luther: but Luther stands forth as the symbol and embodiment of what the Reformation was.

"To the great men of History," says Frederic Harrison, "we owe what we prize most—country, freedom, peace, knowledge, art, thought, and higher sense of right and wrong. What a tale of patience, courage, sacrifice, and martyrdom is the tale of human progress! It affects us as if we were reading in the diary of a parent the record of his struggles for his children. For us they toiled, endured, bled, that we by their labour might have rest, by their thoughts might know, by their death might live."

## HISTORIC BIOGRAPHY

*The lives of Moses, Elijah, and St Paul.* For magnificent self-forgetfulness, heroic courage, and sublime devotion to duty and to God, these lives are without a parallel in history.

Plutarch : *Lives of Greek and Roman Worthies.* There is still no better way of getting at the spirit of the "classic" world than by reading these eternally interesting records

Sir James Stephen : *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography.*

*The Life of Sir Thomas More, Knight*, by his son-in-law, William Roper. Sir Thomas More was one of the noblest and most saintly of all Englishmen.

Cavendish, or Bishop Creighton : *Life of Cardinal Wolsey.*

Foxe : *Book of Martyrs.*

Villari : *Life of Savonarola*

D'Aubigné : *History of the Reformation.* (The Record of Luther.)

Frederic Harrison : *Oliver Cromwell.*

D. Hannay : *Admiral Blake.*

Southey : *Life of Nelson.*

Lord Morley : *Burke.*

Lord Rosebery : *Pitt*

George Hooper : *Wellington.*

Luke Tyerman *Wesley.*

Lord Morley *Gladstone.*

### LITERARY BIOGRAPHY

Boswell: *Life of Johnson*

Lockhart *Sir Walter Scott*

Dean Stanley *Dr Arnold*

Trevelyan *Macaulay*

Carlyle: *John Sterling*

Professor Masson · *De Quincey.*

R. H Hutton: *Cardinal Newman*

Froude. *Carlyle*

J A Symonds · *Shelley.*

Forster. *Goldsmith*

Forster: *Dickens.*

Mrs Gaskell. *Charlotte Brontë*

Stopford Brooke *F. W. Robertson.*

Mrs Kingsley · *Charles Kingsley*

Edward Thomas. *Richard Jefferies.*

Professor Masson *John Milton*

J S. Blackie: *Robert Burns*

By his son *Tennyson*

Mrs Sutherland Orr. *Browning.*

G H Lewes · *Goethe*

Lodge *George Washington*

Morse: *Benjamin Franklin*

Arnold. *Abraham Lincoln*

Other names, more or less illustrious, might

be added to this list, but these will suffice for those who are interested in "the proper study of mankind." The perusal of these Lives will show how much may be achieved by steadfast purpose and strenuous endeavour, apart altogether from that rare endowment which we describe by the word "genius." This mysterious gift may be denied us, but industry and resolve may yet prevail to crown us with success. "Shallow men," says Emerson, "believe in luck; strong men, in cause and effect . . . There is one mind common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet to the same and all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought, he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel." We may contemplate with regret

The dark hair changing to grey,  
Without either laurel or bay—

but if we have achieved the best of which we were capable, and walked in uprightness, we may share the brotherhood of angels

Let us take heart and climb. The lowliest of us springs from an illustrious stock.

What though our ancestors, early and late,  
Were not ennobled by the breath of kings;  
Yet in our veins is running at our birth

The blood of those renowned in our dear land  
For wisdom, virtue—those who could renounce  
The things of this world for their conscience' sake,  
And die like blessed martyrs

### BOOKS OF TRAVEL

There is nothing more fascinating or more informing than travel. Its educative power is immense. Without it we cannot escape from the insularity which is one of the special dangers of the British people. Travel widens our sphere of observation, and teaches us how great peoples have lived and achieved great things, while our remote forefathers were yet uncivilised, and wandered as savages in the dusky woods. A youth was once asked by a patronising elder what books he used in studying geography and history. He answered, somewhat curtly: "I use no books, I go to places." That youth was very fortunate. Egypt, Palestine, Greece, Italy, Spain, how wonderful is their story, and how impressive the relics and memorials of their greatness! Cairo, Girgeh, Luxor, and the hundred-gated Thebes; Constantinople, Rome, Florence, Siena, Venice, Naples, and the unburned wonders of Pompeii, Madrid, Seville, Moscow, Geneva, Paris. To have visited these places is to have a totally new conception of

the world, as well as of man and his achievements. And the facilities offered in our time for such a privilege are nothing less than amazing

But if that privilege is denied us, we may yet see them, and know their story, through the medium of books. "Larger, other eyes than ours," have beheld them; the painter, the etcher, and the photographer have secured a vision of them for our delight, and sitting at ease in our library we may make the tour of the world

Books such as these, many of them attainable in our Free Libraries, if not found on our own shelves, will grandly serve us—

Manning : *The Land of the Pharaohs.*

Edwards : *A Thousand Miles up the Nile.*

Kinglake : *Eothen*

Wilson . *In Scripture Lands.*

Mahaffy . *Rambles and Studies in Greece.*

Gautier : *Constantinople*

Borrow : *The Bible in Spain.*

Stoddard . *Spanish Cities.*

Hare : *Walks in Rome*

Allen : *Florence.*

Hare : *Cities of Northern and Central Italy.*

Taylor : *Northern Europe*

Hare . *Studies in Russia.*

Sir Edwin Arnold : *Sunny Lands and Sunny Seas.*

Lynch : *French Life in Town and Country*  
Macquoid . *Through Normandy.*

Stanley : *The Dark Continent*  
Clifton Johnson . *The New England Country*  
Ainsworth . *All Round the World*

Burnaby : *A Ride to Khiva.*

Curzon . *Persia*

Gordon-Cumming : *Wanderings in China.*

Sir Edwin Arnold : *Japonica.*

### FICTION

Fiction assumes in our time a new significance. In the hands of its masters of the last century, religion, science, history, sociology, philosophy, political economy, have all been transported into it, making it an education as well as a delight. Still it remains true that the novel at its best is an idealisation of human life and character, and from this standpoint it should be judged and appraised. Archbishop Whately says . " Those who delight in the study of human nature may improve in the knowledge of it, and in the profitable application of that knowledge, by the perusal of fiction."

Some object altogether to the reading of fiction, but we are of opinion that it is better

for people to read fiction than to read nothing at all, and when we consider how many hours of languor and anxiety have been relieved and gladdened by it, we feel truly thankful for its alleviating ministry. Furthermore, since the battle of life becomes sterner and fiercer as the years roll on, it is an unspeakable boon to many, to be able, after the toils of the day are over, to retire into an ideal world where its noises creep into silence and its conflicts are forgotten. Then, again, how many otherwise lonely and empty lives are peopled with fair forms and gracious presences through the pages of fiction!

Here, as elsewhere, however, there is the need of careful selection. Novels are essentially books of pleasure, and, like men of pleasure, are often of very doubtful or despicable character. It is necessary, therefore, to discriminate between the select or vulgar, the pure or the impure. As, to use an illustration from Shakespeare, "the dyer's hand becomes subdued to that it works in," so the mind is coloured by that which it absorbs. The prostitution of genius to base ends in a sphere so popular and attractive is a disgrace to humanity. Where we meet with such an example of perfidy we cannot but long

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To put in every honest hand a whip,  
To lash the rascal naked through the world.

### MASTERPIECES OF FICTION

*Don Quixote.* As a book of entertainment, abounding in profound wisdom, this is unparalleled in the world.

*Waverley Novels* "All is great in the Waverley Novels—material, effect, characters, execution"—GOETHE

Thackeray's Novels. Especially *Vanity Fair*, *Henry Esmond*, *The Newcomes*, and *Pendennis*. "The first social regenerator of the day."—CHARLOTTE BRONTE

Dickens' Novels Especially *David Copperfield*, *Dombey and Son*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, and *The Christmas Carol* "The most beneficent good genie that ever wielded a pen."—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

George Eliot's Novels Especially *Silas Marner*, *Adam Bede*, *The Mill on the Floss*, *Romola*, *Daniel Deronda*. "The greatest representative of the analytical and psychological school."—CHARLES WALDSTEIN

Goethe *Wilhelm Meister* This book is repellent in its earlier chapters, but, as a whole, it is a masterpiece of profoundest wisdom.

Victor Hugo. *Les Misérables.* "Full of pathos, full of truth, full of high eloquence. Take it for all in all, there are few books of the world that can be compared with it"—R. L. STEVENSON.

Balzac : *Père Goriot*, *The Quest of the Absolute*, and *The Wild Ass's Skin*. These works, from one who is worthy to be called the Shakespeare of France, are searching and splendid in the last degree. Their pathetic, descriptive, and analytic power is truly marvellous.

C. Bronte : *Jane Eyre*. "Charlotte Bronte painted not the world, hardly a corner of the world, but the very soul of one proud and loving girl. That is enough. It was done with consummate power."—FREDERIC HARRISON

Goldsmith : *Vicar of Wakefield*. "Tender Goldsmith crowned with deathless praise."—WORDSWORTH.

Blackmore : *Lorna Doone*. One of the finest stories which ever sprang from a human brain. Strong, healthy, entrancing.

Charles Reade *The Cloister and the Hearth*. This book is so crowded with incident—~~and~~ romance that it has proved a quarry from which many other novelists have taken blocks of finest marble.

*Robinson Crusoe.* Who that has read this book ever doubted that it was true to the letter? What boy is there who has not been enchanted by it? No book in the English language has been so widely read.

R L. Stevenson : *Treasure Island* The nearest approach to Defoe's immortal work that has ever been achieved in our literature

Hawthorne : *Scarlet Letter*, Not by Shakespeare himself has the power of conscience been more terribly described than in this remarkable volume It has stamped its pitiless accusing brand on the hearts of thousands.

Whiteing : *No 5, John Street* This remarkable novel presents a picture of the appalling contrast between the London of the privileged and wealthy West, and the London of the squalid and poverty-stricken East, which should be studied by all interested in the great social problems of the hour

George Meredith . *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* and *The Egoist* A master of thought and subtle phrasing whose works are in the highest sense of that word—literature.

George MacDonald : *Robert Falconer*, *David Elginbrod* This sweet and noble writer is at present out of fashion, but we turn to him with profit for

A deeper transport and a mightier thrill,  
Than comes of commerce with mortality

Marion Crawford : *A Cigarette Maker's Romance.* We are constrained to place this lovely record of devotion and self-sacrifice side by side with the *Silas Marner* of George Eliot, and the *Christmas Carol* of Dickens

Those who on laudable Christian grounds object to the novel altogether, despite the "Great Teacher's" use of parable, may fitly turn to these three books for the correction of a prejudice, which not infrequently makes the children of the market-place suspicious of their approach, and deaf to their appeals

Here we must pause, bewildered by an embarrassment of riches which makes further selection impossible in the space at our command. Enough has been indicated, however, of that noble nature which will attract the noble, though we cannot but feel rebuked for our silence in the presence of such writers as Charles Kingsley, the elder Dumas, Fenimore Cooper, Mrs Humphry Ward, Mrs F. A. Steele, with many others whose reputation can dispense with our eulogy. Argosies of costly sail and ~~precious~~ cargo, the works to which we have referred our readers are not the ephemeral foam which sparkles for a time upon the wave of transient

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popular favour on which they speedily break and pass into oblivion, but are, in the fullest sense of that much-abused word, *literature*, and such literature as the hungering minds and hearts of men "will not willingly let die"

Despite so much which is depressing and unworthy in this sphere, at once so popular and so entrancing in its appeal, let us take heart of hope, and, thanking God for that which has been noble and inspiring in the past, trust His guiding hand, which is never lifted from the souls of men, for the issues of the future.

The past is past,  
God lives, and lifts His glorious mornings up  
Before the eyes of men awake at last  
We hurry onward to extinguish hell  
With our fresh souls, our younger hope, and God's  
Maturity of glorious purpose.

SPECIAL BRANCHES  
OF STUDY



CHAPTER VII

#### SPECIAL BRANCHES OF STUDY

Thus did I e're rise to rise  
Out of the prison of my mean estate,  
And with such jewels as the exploring mind,  
Brings from the fire of knowledge, win my ransom  
From those twin jailors of the daring heart,  
Low birth, and iron fortune.      BROWNE LITTON

A person who was a very great reader and hard thinker once told me that he never took up a book except with the view of making himself master of some subject which he was studying, and that while he was so engaged he made all his reading converge on that point.

As there are many who, in place of indulging in discursive reading, desire to follow some definite course of study on some one subject to which they have a natural inclination, as, for example, Art, Natural Science, Mental and Moral Philosophy, or Social Economics, we will devote this chapter to guidance as to the methods they should pursue and the works they should consult for the purpose which they have set before them.

It is without question that the habit of ~~useful~~ literary reading, that is, reading without a definite purpose, but simply for entertainment, may be

carried to excess To the toil-worn, the anxious and those who on account of declining years feel that their work in life is done, such reading often affords the best means of relaxation and of escape from disturbing or exhausting thought on problems for which they can find no adequate solution. But the genuine student will find his truest pleasure, as well as his greatest profit, in reading systematically and with some definite aim. His object will be to choose a special subject congenial to his taste, opportunity, and mental capacity, and to follow it with an eye single to it alone.

### **ART**

Art has in general preceded Science, and may be defined as skill on the part of man in the production of the beautiful, or in giving embodiment or expression to the ideal The beauty of Nature is changing and transient. It has its coming and its going The storm may smite and darken it, or the rude hand of winter lay it low Art captures it and represents it for us in permanent and ideal forms The painter, the ~~sculptor~~, the architect, and the musician or tone-poet, seize the angels of beauty as they pass, and hold them fast that they may bless us.

Viewed in one aspect, Art is merely imitative, and expresses human admiration of God's work. Viewed in another aspect, it is creative, and is the product of the human soul which is greater than mere Nature. In every sphere the true artist endeavours in his work to express the conviction that there is a world of purer forms and of more perfect beauty than that in which we move.

They do not speak wisely who say, " Give us Nature, and we can dispense with the refinements of Art. Let us have the original, and let the imitations pass " Art is Nature transfigured and transformed by the spirit in man, haunted by the vision of an ideal loveliness. Nature, like the rugged Esau, kneels for the blessing of the human soul.

It is true that in great masters we see how frankly the highest invention owns a willing dependence on Nature ; but in many instances, wherein the artist ascends to the pure heaven of invention, we are able to discern the point at which the study of reality yields to the influence of the ideal—where the magic of the painter's genius transcends the skill of the mere ~~copyist~~, and he stands by his work like a god. To use a fine phrase of Browning's, " he lends his soul out," to produce for us ideal beauty.

## GUIDES TO THE STUDY OF ART

As by a vital necessity Art includes within its scope *Aesthetics*, or the science or philosophy of the beautiful, we commend on this subject the very able article on *Aesthetics* by Professor Sully in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

Passing from the study of beauty in the abstract to its embodiment by man in lovely or impressive forms, and glancing first at *Architecture*, the three books which we recommend are :

A L Tuckerman : *Short History of Architecture*

J H Parker : *ABC of Gothic Architecture*.

Atkinson . *Short History of English Architecture*.

In *Sculpture*, the following books are valuable :

E Grosse : *The Beginnings of Art.* (New York )

F B Tarbell : *History of Greek Art*

G Redford : *Manual of Ancient Sculpture*

~~In~~ In regard to *Painting*, we recommend :

Woltmann and Woermann : *History of Painting*.

Rev. E. L. Cutts : *History of Early Christian Art.*

H. Wölfflin : *The Art of the Italian Renaissance.*

H. J. W. Buxton : *English and American Painting.*

John Ruskin : *Modern Painters* This book is nothing less than a prose poem dealing in masterly fashion with the might of J. M. W. Turner, and with the charm of landscape, seascape, sky-scape, and mountain glories.

## MUSIC

More subtle and evanescent than any of its sister arts, Music is yet of them all the most promptly, profoundly, and generally felt. It speaks to the universal soul. It transcends the limitations of verbal language and is understood by all nations, and peoples, and tongues. Properly speaking, music is a language—the language of feeling, the voice of the heart. “Music,” says Wagner, “is a woman,” and feeling is, and must be, its prevailing element. It finds fitting expression for all the emotions of the heart, whether it leaps in joy, or wails in sorrow, or expands in praise.

Music is as great, nay greater, in what it suggests than in what it expresses. Some deprecate

it as a language because of its indefiniteness ; but to those who look deep enough this very indefiniteness is one of its special charms Mendelssohn's *Songs without Words* are robbed of half their power when you attempt to imprison them in words Fetter them in words, and you deprive the angels of their wings The sonatas and symphonies of Beethoven, in which he steals melodies from heaven for the consolation of the children of earth, would lose grandeur in place of gaining it by any attempt to imprison them in words They say far more to us as they stand, placing in our hands

That golden key  
That opes the palace of eternity,

and suggesting the choral harmonies which, day without night, make jubilee in heaven

On this fascinating subject, the best books we have met with are :

Emil Naumann *History of Music*

J. E. Matthew. *Manual of Musical History*

C H H. Parry : *The Evolution of the Art of Music*

Ernest Walker. *History of Music in England*

Grove *Dictionary of Music and Musicians.*

- F. L. Humphreys. *Evolution of Church Music.*  
Annie Patterson: *The Story of Oratorio.*  
R. A. Streatfeild: *The Opera.*  
F. L. Ritter: *Student's History of Music.*

### NATURAL SCIENCE

The word Science, coming from the Latin *scientia*, really means knowledge, and it has come to be applied to definite knowledge concerning the phenomena of Nature. Science has been well defined as knowledge reduced to order; that is, knowledge so classified and arranged that it is under the command of the thinker and can easily be applied.

The Kingdom of Science is so wide and multifarious that it would need an extensive treatise and not a brief chapter such as this to explore it adequately. It may be roughly divided into Astronomy, Geology, Geography, Biology, and Botany.

With regard to the history of Physical Science, we do not know of a more helpful book than J. Marmery's *The Progress of Science*. Arabella Buckley's *Short History of Natural Science*, Arthur Berry's *History of Astronomy*, and E. Clodd's *Pioneers of Evolution*, are also valuable as textbooks.

## ASTRONOMY

Astronomy deals with the constitution, development, and movements of the heavenly bodies. It can scarcely be studied effectively without the aid of a telescope, affording practical demonstration of the statements advanced by writers on this sublime and engrossing subject.

It demands also a sound knowledge of mathematics, together with some insight into that comparatively new discovery through spectrum analysis of the substances which are common to all worlds. This magnificent branch of science has also been wonderfully assisted by the application of Darwin's great principle of Evolution, a principle which may be said to have revolutionised the entire sphere of physical inquiry as well as that of the special realm in which this great thinker so conscientiously laboured.

So many good treatises have been written on this subject that the student can hardly fail to find many of them at hand in the nearest public library. The following are among the best.

Sir John Herschel *Astronomy*

Prof H. G. Seeley. *The Story of the Earth.*

G. F. Chambers *Story of the Solar System*

Prof Simon Newcomb. *Popular Astronomy*  
 Miss Agnes M. Clerke: *History of Astronomy  
 in the Nineteenth Century.*

Sir Robert Ball: *Story of the Heavens.*

Failing a telescope, the student should get a star-atlas, and by it fix the position of the great constellations on a clear, moonless night.

### GEOLOGY

This is the science which deals with the structure of the crust of the globe, the substances which compose it, and the various changes which have affected its surface through the ages. A walk by the sea-shore, on the banks of the river, or among the mountains is the best preparation for the study of books concerning it. Among these we may mention:

Sir A. Geikie: *Primer of Geology.*

Marr: *Introduction to Geology*

Sir Charles Lyell: *Principles of Geology.*

W. H. Penning: *Textbook of Field Geology*

Watt: *Geology for Beginners.*

Hugh Miller: *Old Red Sandstone.*

### BIOLOGY

Omitting any special reference to Geography, which is fairly taught in all our schools, we come to the science of Biology, which treats

of the origin, development, and distribution of organised beings, or animals and plants. Thus study has been revolutionised in recent years by Darwin's important discovery of the evolutional method of creation. The kernel of this discovery is, that the innumerable species, genera, and families of organic beings with which this world is peopled, have all descended from a few roots, perhaps from one vital root, and have all been so modified in the course of their descent as to produce the wonderful variety which we find around us.

This conception brings a vast mass of phenomena, once deemed disjointed, into the realm of law, by showing how causes, seemingly simple and familiar, have produced results of the utmost complexity; it discloses an orderly sequence of living forms, advancing gradually toward perfection, yet each good in its time and for its circumstances, while it reveals God, not as some mechanic of preternatural skill and activity, but as the Being "of Whom, and through Whom, and to Whom" are all things.

A general survey of the field of biology may be found in some of the encyclopædia articles, notably in that by Huxley in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and that by P. Geddes in *Chambers's Encyclopædia*. Then may be studied •

- J. Arthur Thomson : *The Science of Life.*  
Spencer : *Principles of Biology.*  
Karl Pearson : *Grammar of Science.*  
Darwin : *Origin of Species*  
Alexander Hill : *Introduction to Science.*  
Gilbert White : *Selborne.*  
Roberts : *Naturalist's Diary.*

,  
**BOTANY**

This fascinating branch of science, which deals with the vegetable kingdom, is one which the lover of the country and of the garden may fitly take up with a delight which grows with what it feeds on. Furthermore, like every other important branch of science, it has relations which touch all knowledge and which stretch out into the infinite. Tennyson has beautifully stated this truth in that remarkable little poem, which reads :

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower—but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and man is

- Here we may instance as helpful books :  
Geddes *Chapters in Modern Botany.*  
Kerner : *Life of Plants.*

Green · *Manual of Botany*.

Scott : *Structural Botany*.

Darbishire · *Plant-book for Schools*

Darwin · *Insectivorous Plants*.

Hooker · *Student's Flora*.

In this enchanting realm, open to all who love green lanes and pleasant fields, we learn how the deathless charm of Nature, and the all-embracing wisdom of God, may be traced in the tiniest flower as well as in the midnight sky.

Peering into the daisy's crown

Until its wonders deep have grown

A mighty gulf to drink us down.

## PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is the science of mind. It deals with the facts and laws of mental operation. This science deserves to be ranked among the natural sciences, since the object of its investigation must be regarded as a part of Nature and its most important part, namely, the human mind, which is the glory and the crown of Nature.

In Psychology, or Mental Philosophy, the student possesses within himself the elements of the science which he attempts to master and explore. It is a science resting on experience,

observation, and induction, dealing with the intelligence through which man is, as Browning expresses it :

For eye removed  
From the developed brute ; a god, though in the  
germ

Among the most useful works on this subject are :

J. M. Baldwin : *The Story of the Mind*

William James : *Textbook of Psychology*.

Bain : *Mental and Moral Science*.

Porter : *The Human Intellect*.

E. B. Titchener : *Primer of Psychology*.

C. Lloyd Morgan : *Introduction to Comparative Psychology*.

James Sully : *Outlines of Psychology*

Locke : *The Human Understanding*.

#### MORAL PHILOSOPHY

Moral Philosophy is the science of human duty. It is the philosophy of our knowledge of moral law, of the application of that law to human life, and of our relations as moral beings. The task of the moral philosopher is to investigate the principles according to which men act, the motives which influence them, the passions and desires, the tendencies and tastes, which affect men in the sphere of conduct. It deals with that solemn and majestic law of

duty concerning which, as Richard Hooker grandly declares, "there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world : all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power."

It was the recognition of this law of duty, borne home to the conscience by that grace of the Divine Spirit, which is the natural endowment of man, which inspired the sublime prayer of Sophocles in his *Oedipus Tyrannus*. "Ο that my lot might lead me in the path of holy innocence of thought and deed, the path which august laws ordain—laws which in the highest heaven had their birth, neither did the race of mortal men beget them, nor shall oblivion ever put them to sleep."

Wordsworth's sublime *Ode to Duty* is rich in instruction on this great theme. The following stanzas affect the mind like a song of the spheres :

Stern Daughter of the Voice of God !  
 O Duty, if that name thou love  
 Who art a light to guide, a rod  
 To check the erring, and reprove ;  
 Thou, who art victory and law  
 When empty terrors overawe ;

From vain temptations dost set free ;  
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity !

. . . . .

Stern Lawgiver ! yet thou dost wear  
The Godhead's most benignant grace ;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face :  
Flowers laugh before thee on thy beds,  
And fragrance in thy footing treads ,  
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong ,  
And the most ancient heavens, through thee, are  
fresh and strong

The literature of Moral Philosophy is very complete and illuminating. We recommend the following works on this subject :

Sidgwick : *Outlines of the History of Ethics.*

Mackenzie : *Manual of Ethics.*

Martineau : *Types of Ethical Theory.*

Dorner : *System of Christian Ethics.*

Whewell : *Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England.*

Sir Leslie Stephen : *Science of Ethics*

Sir J. Mackintosh : *Progress of Ethical Philosophy.*

Lecky : *History of European Morals.*

### SOCIAL ECONOMICS

In the sphere of social conditions, social reforms, and the science of those laws which

provide for the increase of comfort in the distribution of wealth, we are greatly in need of a new nomenclature. The terms used, such, for example, as Politics, Economics, Sociology, etc etc, are in the highest degree confusing and unsatisfactory. We need a phrase which comprehends the general well-being of the people, a subject of the very first importance in these days of social conflict and unrest.

Next to the awful problem, stated by Wordsworth, as

The dread strife  
Of poor humanity's afflicted will,  
Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny,

is the general condition of the toilers in all lands, their homes, their prospects, and the duty of the State with regard to them. The poverty, the hopelessness, the want of work for willing hands, which make a bitter chance of the poor man's lot, together with the manifold social and economic evils which render his position painful, if not, indeed, intolerable, demand thoughtful consideration on the part of all classes of the community. As Goldsmith has said :

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates and men decay

We may denounce Socialism, whether it is of

the kind which means the State doing for the individual what he ought to do for himself, or the State taking private property for national purposes; but we need to study thoughtfully and, above all, humanely, the conditions which create and foster Socialism, and how they can be alleviated and, if possible, swept away.

Rousseau said : " When the poor have nothing to eat, they will 'eat the rich'"—an utterance which may well give us pause amid the seething discontent around us.

The fact is that we have reached a condition in this country which is at the same time most hopeful and most dangerous, and we need such a study of the clashing elements around us as will justify the hope and escape the danger. Neither culpable ignorance, nor "the miserable aims which end in self," will serve us here. Our only wisdom is to study the conditions which confront us and to meet them in brave, unselfish fashion.

#### BOOKS ON THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

Schaffle : *Quintessence of Socialism.*

Spencer. *Principles of Sociology.*

Prof. J. S. Mackenzie : *Introduction to Social Philosophy.*

Henry George *Progress and Poverty.*

Hobson *Problems of Poverty.*

Kirkup. *History of Socialism.*

Flint. *Socialism.*

Peabody: *Jesus Christ and the Social Question.*

Mallock: *Labour and Popular Welfare.*

Ruskin: *Unto this Last.*

Kingsley: *Alton Locke*

Nunquam. *Merrie England.*

That all men are brothers That it is the duty of the strong to care for the weak. That in harmony with the noble canon of Kant we should "make no man a means to our ends, but hold every man to be an end in himself." That "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" is the divine goal of social economics. That no man willing to labour should be permitted to starve, because through the application of machinery to modern industries there is not sufficient work to go all round. These are principles from which no educated conscience can break away, and day by day they are being more deeply imprinted on the minds of men.

That blunders will be made in the attempted application of these principles is well-nigh certain.

considering the limitation of the human intellect and the strength of human passions. But because God reigns, that which is honourable and benevolent—the gold, the silver, and the precious stones—will survive the fire in which the wood, and hay, and stubble of our imperfect civilisation is consumed. Forms and privileges which seemed venerable and beautiful may be shattered, but it will only be to liberate a spirit imprisoned in them more venerable and lovely, because more tender and humane. A few stanzas from Whittier's poem entitled "The Reformer," are appropriate here :

All grim and soiled, and brown with tan,  
I saw a Strong One in his wrath,  
Smiling the godless shrines of man  
Along his path

The Church beneath her trembling dome,  
Essayed in vain her ghostly charm  
Wealth shook within his gilded home  
With strange alarm . . .

Young Romance raised his dreamy eyes,  
O'erhung with flowing locks of gold—  
"Why smite," he asked in sad surprise,  
"The fair, the old?"

Yet louder rang the Strong One's stroke,  
Yet nearer flashed his axe's gleam,  
Shuddering and sick of heart I woke,  
As from a dream

I looked aside the dust-cloud rolled—  
The Waster seemed the Builder too,  
Upspringing from the ruined Old  
I saw the New

'Twas but the ruin of the bad—  
The wasting of the wrong and ill;  
Whate'er of good the old time had  
Was living still . . .

God works in all things, all obey  
His first propulsion from the night.  
Wake thou and watch!—the world is gray  
With morning light!

SOCIETY AND  
MENTAL CULTURE



## CHAPTER VIII

### SOCIETY AND MENTAL CULTURE

Humanity is great,  
And if I would not rather pore upon  
An ounce of common, ugly, human dust,  
An artisan's palm or a peasant's brow.  
Unsmooth, ignoble, save to me and God,  
Than track old Nilus to his silver roots.  
Or wait on all the changes of the moon  
Among the mountain peaks of Thessaly,  
Set it down as weakness—strength by no means

E B BROWNING

By becoming one with the social self, the individual, instead of being crushed, is made far vaster, far grander, than before

EDWARD CARPENTER

NATURE has her instruction and her balm for those who seek after wisdom, but we must ascend from Nature to man, her crown and epitome, for a yet higher culture. While the appreciative mind

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything,  
it does not, therefore, disregard

That capability of godlike reason  
which is the stamp of man's excelling dignity,

and in virtue of which all lower creatures are placed under his dominion.

Except in so far as we read a meaning into her varied voices, Nature is a silent apparition, while the human soul asks for a human voice for guidance, consolation, and encouragement. If, dwelling amid the solitudes of Nature, we lose the human touch and break away from human sympathies, we have found in her not gain, but loss. We need to seek intercourse with living hearts as well as with woodland haunts—especially with those around us whose minds and characters are fitted to instruct, elevate, and sweeten our own.

Yet further, with regard to books. Living with books is easy work. Living with people not so easy. In books the author gives us only of his best, and when we are tired of his company we can lay him aside. He can neither bore us, nor borrow from us. His ill-temper does not vex, or his cynicism discourage. His golden silence cannot be marred by impertinence. We may dislike him, but he will not retaliate. We may differ from him, but he will not wrangle.

In society, on the other hand, we must both give and take. There is a natural clashing of opinions which demands tolerance, patience, and courtesy. We cannot have it all our own

way. Qualities and dispositions are cultivated in us which books do not develop. All this is favourable to self-culture. Intercourse with others in the fellowships of common life stands among the foremost of our teachers.

Much has been written in praise of solitude, but men are brothers and are mutually dependent one upon another. The highest wisdom has declared that "it is not good for man to dwell alone." We cannot, if we would, separate our life from that of humanity as a whole. We live in it, by it, and for it. Our minds cannot rid themselves of the influence of the human elements amid which they move.

Beautiful and noble characters can find nothing so stimulating and so helpful as beautiful and noble character. It was truly said by Vauvenargues: "Sooner or later we enjoy only souls." With every man, mankind, or some representative of it, is ideally present in every act of consciousness and thought.

As Borne said, "Man can do without much, but not without men." The anchorite who affects a superiority which enables him to dispense with human society would go mad if he thought he was utterly alone in the world. He has not been able to pluck out the heart-strings which bind him to his fellows. Hence

when St Antony sought out St. Paul, one of the early hermits, and succeeded after much difficulty in gaining admittance to his cave, the first question of the long-hidden recluse was, "How fares the human race?" Men of all races are brothers, and "he that loveth not his brother abideth in death." He is starved and undone, for one coal cannot make a fire. Aristotle declares the family and social relations to be the master-facts of humanity. We cannot break away from the law of kindred. We suffer or rejoice together. "For," as Russell Lowell sings :

For mankind are one in spirit, and an instinct bears  
along,  
Round the earth's electric circle the swift flash of  
right and wrong,  
Whether conscious, or unconscious, yet Humanity's  
vast frame  
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of  
joy or shame,—  
In the gain or loss of one race all the rest have equal  
claim

#### THE THRILLING DRAMA OF HUMAN LIFE

"All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," and how profound is the significance of human life in its triumphs and its tears, its glory and its shame! Who can survey

with indifference its movement and its mystery ? Does it not " lie too deep for tears " ? The laughing child, ignorant of the snares and perils which await her in the years to be. The mother ministering to the helplessness of infancy, bending like an angel o'er the dying, or watching the stars out for her wandering sons. The ardent youth entering the arena with a smile, in which he must fight with beasts, strong, ravenous, and implacable. The aged labourer, who has shared so scantily in the harvests he has gathered, stooping meekly, after his years of cheerless toil, toward a pauper's grave. The profligate emaciated by vices, whose remembrance is a sigh. The poet with his glorious gift of winged words and noble look—

As if where'er he gazed, there stood a star.

The patriarch, " whose locks are ripe and full of awe." The blind man lifting his ruined orbs to heaven. The maiden

Standing with reluctant feet,  
Where the brook and river meet.

The thinker baffled by the mysteries of life and picking up questions for eternity. The slum dweller " struggling in vain with ruthless destiny." The priest in his perilous isolation, unintended by the love of woman, and ungladdened

by the child's sweet trust and ringing laughter.  
The consecrated soul—

To whom dishonour's shadow is a substance  
More terrible than death here or hereafter

The statesman staggering under the burden  
of empire The collier toiling in the darkness of  
the mine. The stoker facing from hour to hour  
the furnace fire. The engine-driver rushing  
through the resounding air with his human  
freight behind him The mariner stung by the  
flying drift or careering through the tempest as  
he furls the flapping sail The society woman,  
flattered and imperilled, adorning herself for the  
festival, or wailing over the wreck of her beauty.  
The lone woman whose vase of love remains  
unbroken, unless it has been poured out at the  
feet of her Redeemer. The minister of Christ  
pleading with men for their renovation and  
uplifting, and often full of heart-break because  
of the inadequate response to his yearning and  
his passion The philanthropist, moving through  
life

with anxious pitying eyes  
As if he always listened to the sighs  
Of the goaded world

The man of faith singing amid the shadows  
which darken round him—

God's in His heaven :  
All's right with the world.

The poor, sharing the sorrows of the poor—hard workers, patient sufferers, loving sisters, faithful friends—who can contemplate all this without emotion and enlargement of heart and mind ?

“ The world of books,” says one, “ is at the best a world of shadows ; one turns from it at times to drink anew and with unspeakable interest and delight at the inexhaustible fountains of life. The man who goes to books instead of life, who gets his knowledge of humanity out of Shakespeare and of Nature from Words-worth, will never know either profoundly The Alps are more majestic than the noblest picture of them which artist ever put on canvas, and men and women in the multiform relations of life are more wonderful than any portraiture by the greatest dramatist.”

There are capacities and qualities in mind to which society is just as necessary as light to the eye or food to the body You cannot think your best, put forth your strongest, live out your noblest, save in a social state, where every other man is free to do the same. The mind is the man, and the object of society is the educating, maturing, and completing of the man. Life is a school, and, as in a school, its lessons are learnt through communion, collision, and competition with others.

The gift of speech attests that man is made for society, as well as society for him, and that intercourse with his fellows is one of the foremost laws of his existence and development. Euripides says : "Social intercourse is the teacher of all things to mortals" Dr. Jowett says : "It were better not to have been born, than to live in doubt and alienation from mankind." We need to put out our tendrils and clasp others that we may live and grow by them. Shenstone's rebuke is appropriate here :

In cloistered state let selfish sages dwell,  
Proud that their heart is narrow as their cell

The educative power of society is well stated by Wendell Phillips, where he says : "Society is the only field where the sexes have ever met on terms of equality, the arena where character is formed and studied, the cradle and the realm of public opinion, the crucible of ideas, the world's university, at once a school and a theatre, the spur and the crown of ambition, and the tribunal which unmasks pretension and stamps real merit "

### THE FAMILY

Social education begins with the family. Those who would enter on the great task of social education must begin at home They

must begin as son and daughter, as sister and brother. In those capacities they must practise the self-denial, the submissiveness, the reverence, the truthfulness, the consideration, and the fidelity, which will serve them so well in the broad field of life.

It is in the home that the fine qualities of trust, tolerance, constancy, and unselfishness are first tested, and where the social *virtues* find their cradle. It is in the home that we feel our first ties, confront our first trials, and face our first problems. It is the microcosm, the miniature, of the great world with which we must afterwards contend. Can we conform to the home discipline? Can we submit to the home scrutiny? Can we bear without resentment and rebellion a mother's rebuke, a father's correction? Can we offer adequate response to a sister's clinging affection, or a brother's chivalrous devotion? Much in our future intercourse with men will depend on this. It is in the home that the culture of our best life should begin —a life not only emotional, but intellectual. Blessed is the man whose own father has made all other fathers respected, whose own sister has made all other sisters sacrosanct, and whose own mother has made all other mothers venerable.

**BUSINESS LIFE**

In the activities of business we find another fruitful source of mental culture. It is a low and unworthy view of business which regards it only as a means for getting a living. It is also a school for mind and character. A man's business represents his share in the world's work, his contribution to the activities which make society possible. It is not difficult to see how human energy, human forbearance, human equity, human justice, and the jewel of human honesty, find a daily discipline in business life. It is not an extravagance to affirm that business both touches and teaches philosophy, science, and morals. The shop, the mill, the field, the mine, the market, and the exchange are among our foremost educators. The man who succeeds in trade in these days of strenuous competition must be made of sterling stuff. Emptiness, artificiality, and conceit will not serve him in this battle. He must know himself and his capacity. He must study and understand other men. He must possess more than ordinary decision of character and concentration of thought. He must practise daily caution and self-restraint. He must excel in manly perseverance and in strenuous industry. The various

manifestations of character and of cunning with which he comes into contact must afford a liberal education in mental alertness and mental adaptation to the rugged conditions which entail a perpetual conflict. The warehouse is an open port for character, and he who acquits himself nobly there "shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men."

### SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP

Another great educator in the realm of mind is social fellowship. If we would acquire mental culture we must seek fellowship with other minds, and, as far as may be, minds greater than our own. "*Hast thou anything?*" says a German thinker "*Then give it me and I will pay thee for it. Art thou anything? Then let us change souls.*" Truly helpful is the communion in which we change souls with others, sharing their thoughts and catching their fire.

Much of what is called society is painfully empty and frivolous, but we cannot come into contact with the wise without drinking in wisdom, or with the noble without being lifted into a higher region of aim and conduct than that in which we have been tempted to dwell. To converse with people who are intelligent and well-informed is to be drawn on to finer culture

by the double urgency of a reproach and an invitation. Erasmus, when his guardian desired him, in early life, to enter a monastery, replied : " No, I will not, I neither know what the world is, nor what I am myself I shall continue a few more years at school that I may become better acquainted with myself."

There are some people we meet who call out our worst qualities—with whom we feel by a sort of instinct that we are in mental antagonism. Such people we should avoid. There are others who call out the best in us—who by a certain felicity of manner, blended with sympathy and magnanimity, unseal in us springs of thought and feeling which were hidden even from ourselves Such people we should cultivate.

### THE VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP

The ministry which reveals us more fully to ourselves is one of the first benefits of a genuine friendship A friend is one in whose company we can think aloud and not be misunderstood. He kindles thought in us and tempts us into speech :

For sparks electric only strike  
On souls electrical alike,  
The flash of intellect expires  
Unless it meet congenial fires.



into it the best things " This is a rule of inestimable value with regard to the society we cultivate, and among these best things will be found the company of pure and noble women. We cannot fail to note the influence of women as a force and an inspiration in society. They deliver people from awkwardness and vulgarity by their words and looks They refine and clear the mind They discern, as by instinct, the quality of things, and they are swift 'in the presence of merit to admire and praise In men there is almost always something of jealousy if they encounter a mind superior to their own They resent its flashes of thought or sallies of wit, and not seldom bring down a bright fancy with a sneer, as if a man should shoot a kingfisher on the wing A woman, on the other hand, will delight in it and give it welcome. "Her domain," as one has said, "is the coy and subtle world of emotion She will look into your eyes, and see you think ; listen to your voice, and hear you feel " She is not jealous when she encounters a keen intellect, because she is not self-sufficing

John Foster, a man of mighty brain, but timid and retiring in company to the last degree, wrote of a cultivated and excellent woman whose cordial admiration and encouragement were to his spirit as the morning dew to the



behaviour if they are to elicit the best which the society of their fellows has to offer. Society, rightly considered, is a school for conduct and a discipline for character. Whether we receive from it blessing or cursing, sunny favour or chilling neglect, a smile or a sneer, the warm hand or the cold shoulder, will altogether depend on our own attitude with regard to it. The tuition which society affords to the observant mind is of no mean order. To see it at its best is to learn the most fruitful lessons with regard to the behaviour which is fitting in our intercourse with others. See the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak ; see genuine kindness seeking out the unknown and the timid, see thoughtful patience exercised on behalf of the helplessness which is no longer pathetic but only irritating ; see the self-forgetful devices of the simple desire to please ; see true politeness waving every unwelcome topic and withholding its own opinions in deference to the opinions of others ; see trained and delicate foresight warding off the subjects which awaken painful memory, and swift to heal where self-respect has been wounded ; see noble boldness rebuking the impure suggestion and giving back the lie to slander ; see fine integrity defending the absent and suggesting to the uncharitable

a more excellent way; see sincerity like that of a little child scorning the vulgarity of pretence by its conspicuous honesty, and it will not be difficult to realise the educative power of social intercourse.

Neither is it from lovely behaviour only that valuable lessons may be learned. One asked an observant philosopher from whom he had learnt manners. He answered: "From the unmannerly."

#### "HONOUR • ALL MEN"

"That social intercourse may be profitable and instructive there are certain laws of conduct and sentiment which should be religiously observed. One of the very first of these is that we should despise no man. We must steadfastly refuse to accept that dictum of Thomas Carlyle, uttered surely in a moment of dyspeptic pessimism, that men are "mostly fools." There are fools amongst men, it is true, but most men are not fools but wise. So truly is this the case that the consensus of calm public opinion on any great question of conduct, policy, or morals is the best and surest of all guides

The kindly Emerson forgot himself when he alluded to the masses as "rude, lame, unmade, pernicious in their demands and influence."

The effect of such phrases is unhappy. They betray in their use an absence of that sympathy which goes downward for the purpose of lifting upward. How much better the precept of St Paul, "Honour all men." How much diviner the sentiment of Channing, "I recognise God even in the lowest man." A man's opinion of other men is a confession of his own character. The noble will see the noble in human nature, and the base, the base.

As a minister in a church with a special mission to the masses, the writer is constrained to make confession that in the so-called common people he has found virtues and sanctities, a spirit of love and self-sacrifice, a grace of helpfulness and charity toward others less fortunate than themselves, together with a reverence and affection for their real helpers, which has contrasted painfully with the demeanour of many others in more privileged circles. Neither has he ever met a man so ignorant that he could not receive from him something which he did not know, and which it was worth his while to know. Who of us can afford to despise the man who builds a wall, or carves a finial, or furls a flapping sail in tempest, or measures at a glance the bulk and value of a tree?

Like pools that lie by the wayside after

showers, lowliest minds may reflect the light of heaven, and mirror Arcturus with his train when night wears all its stars. Grim but veracious is Tennyson where he says :

Here and there a cottar's babe is royal-born by right divine ;

Here and there my lord is lower than his oxen or his swine.

Contempt and scorn, unless directed by nobler emotions, are as pernicious as they are easy and vulgar. It is better to lift the eye than to curl the lip. Contempt is the product of mental poverty. It indicates a mean and creeping soul. Contempt is murder committed by the intellect, as hate is murder committed by the heart.

#### CULTIVATE GENEROUS JUDGMENTS

Yet another important law for self-improvement in social intercourse is the cultivation of generous judgments. It is more or less a habit with all of us to sit in judgment on our fellows, than which there is no more dangerous exercise of our mental faculties. If, however, we must needs judge, let us judge nobly, for the mind is poisoned which cherishes ungenerous thoughts of others.

The charity which “ thinketh no evil,” which

"rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth," is the best law of conduct with regard to others. Furthermore, if we reflect, we shall find that our kindest judgments have always been most accurate when all the circumstances have been brought to light. The complexity of human life is such that God alone can understand and apportion his due to any man.

No man can justly censure or condemn another, because no man truly knows another. We only hear or see separate words and actions, while the motive is hidden from our view. Besides, it is a part of nobleness in human intercourse to help people to be noble.

You can get no good out of people by thinking meanly of them. The charm of social intercourse consists in mutual trust and good fellowship. We learn nothing that is helpful from the suspected. They freeze at our touch and are dumb. It is the sun which calls out the flowers.

#### GIVE AS WELL AS RECEIVE

Yet further, if we would profit from social intercourse we must seek to give as well as to receive. We must contribute our quota to the common stock of information or entertainment. Silence is not always wisdom, though it may be

mistaken for it. We receive little of help or inspiration from the dumb. There may be much of selfishness in silence.

We have heard of a number of literary men meeting at a dinner party who were afraid to speak lest their ideas should be appropriated by one of the guests at the table. We are bold to adventure the statement that such crumbs, had they fallen among the company, would have proved of little value. A truly great mind will scatter largess like a king, not caring who may use the gold. He will talk as the bird sings, because there is music in him. "You will never enjoy the world aright," says Thomas Treherne, "till you so love the beauty of enjoying it that you are covetous and earnest to persuade others to enjoy it." The same thing may be said of an inspiring thought. Knowledge is not given to keep, but to impart. The grace of this rich jewel is lost if it never comes into the light. We increase mental wealth by putting it into circulation.

Furthermore, should we have but little or nothing to communicate, there is yet a virtue which we can cultivate, and it is that of a good listener. A good listener is as rare as a good speaker. To listen with a brightening eye and an alert and open ear is a fine quality

where there is talent to be called out. To listen well is to make other people talk well. The good listener, though he may be a poor talker, is a cause of talking in others. It is a good thing to be a conductor of other men's lightning, though we may give out no sparks of our own.

#### WELCOME WISDOM FROM ANY QUARTER

Some people are uneasy if conversation wanders into some range or sphere with which they have little or no sympathy, and falls to the lot of certain people in the company whose peculiar gift is alien to their own. They resent the discussion of subjects with which they themselves are not familiar, and the play of intellects cast in a mould other than that in which they are accustomed to think and meditate. This is a form of egotism which contracts the mind and shuts out much which might otherwise inform and enlarge it. There is nothing which more enriches the mind than the habit of laying it genially open to impressions received from the exercise of every species of power. There is nothing by which it is more impoverished than the habit of depreciating that which lies outside its own peculiar province. To be truly and broadly cultured, it should welcome all

that is of merit from whatever source it may proceed.

F. W. Robertson strikes a valuable note on this subject. He says : "There is no surer mark of a half-educated mind than the incapacity of admiring various forms of excellence. Men who cannot praise Dryden without dispraising Coleridge ; nor feel the stern, earthly truthfulness of Crabbe without disparaging the wild, ethereal, impalpable music of Shelley ; nor exalt Spenser except by sneering at Tennyson, are precisely the persons to whom it should in consistency seem strange that in God's world there is a place for the eagle and the wren, a separate grace to the swan and the hummingbird, their own fragrance to the cedar and the violet. Enlarge your tastes that you may enlarge your hearts as well as your pleasures ; feel all that is beautiful ; love all that is good "

That master of wit and wisdom, Sydney Smith, has also a deliverance on this matter which we cannot forbear from quoting. He says : "There is a strong disposition in men of opposite minds to despise each other. A grave man cannot conceive what is the use of a wit in society ; a person who takes a strong common-sense view of a subject is for pushing out by the head and shoulders an ingenious theorist, who catches

at the lightest and faintest analogies ; and another man, who scents the ridiculous from afar, will hold no commerce with him who tastes exquisitely the fine feelings of the heart, and is alive to nothing else ; whereas talent is talent, and mind is mind, in all its branches. Wit gives to life one of its best flavours ; common-sense leads to immediate action, and gives society its daily motion ; large and comprehensive views its annual rotation ; ridicule chastises folly and impudence, and keeps men in their proper sphere ; subtlety seizes hold of the fine threads of truth ; analogy darts away to the most sublime discoveries , feeling paints all the exquisite passions of man's soul, and rewards him by a thousand inward visitations for the sorrows that come from without. God made it all ! It is all good ! We must despise no sort of talent , they all improve, exalt, and gladden life.”

All are architects of Fate,  
Working in these walls of time ;  
Some with massive deeds and great,  
Some with ornaments of rhyme.

RELIGION AND  
MENTAL CULTURE



## CHAPTER IX

### RELIGION AND MENTAL CULTURE

Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars  
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,  
Is reason to the soul and as on high  
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,  
Not light us here, so reason's glimmering ray  
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,  
But guide us upward to a better day  
• And as those mighty tapers disappear  
When day's bright lord ascends the hemisphero,  
So pale grows reason at religion's sight,  
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light

DRYDEN

Religion is a necessary, an indispensable element in any great human character, it is the tie that connects man with his Creator, and holds him to His throne

DANIEL WEBSTER

RELIGION is the spring and fount of all true culture It is the diamond set in the golden ring of knowledge. Books that give no recognition to religion are stones rather than bread, and thinkers unmoved by its high monitions fly with wounded wings If we would attain a culture worthy of our nature as human, and our destiny as divine, we must bid

Celestial light

Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers Irradiate.

Closely associated with the discerning and reasoning intellect there is, as Dryden teaches in the lines we have quoted, a yet finer quality of mind and soul which is as superior to the cold intellect as the intellect is superior to the senses. This quality is what may be termed a spiritual intellect—a spiritual apprehension, a grander and higher light which glows above the intellect—a light which not only informs and illuminates it, but raises it into a diviner region of thought and consciousness than that which pertains to the logical understanding. It is in virtue of this quality that men, apart altogether from any written revelation, “seek God, if haply they may feel after Him, and find Him,” and that the saint, having found Him, lies folded in His embrace as in a mother’s arms.

To the fine insight of the poet this is as surely demonstrated as to the responsive and receptive spirit of the saint. In his “Pauline,” Browning says .

I cannot chain my soul ; it will not rest  
 In its clay prison, this most narrow sphere .  
 It has strange impulse, tendency, desire,  
 Which nowise I account for or explain,  
 But cannot stifle, being bound to trust  
 All feelings equally, to hear all sides ,  
 How can my life indulge them ? Yet they live,  
 Referring to some state of life unknown

Again, in lines of rare sublimity, our greatest poet since Milton gives thanks "that in our embers there is something that doth live," reminding us of the source from whence we sprang, and the bourne to which we must return. Sweet, he says, are the memories of childhood, and the thought of past years amid the sanctities of home "breeds perpetual benediction." But, he continues,

Not for these I raise  
The song of thanks and praise ;  
But for those obstinate questionings  
Of sense and outward things,  
Fallings from us, vanishings ;  
Blank musings of a Creature  
Moving about in-worlds not realised,  
High instincts before which our mortal nature  
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised

Whence these high instincts, these lofty premonitions of finer being and higher destiny, but from the Universal Father who hungers for the love and trust of His human children, and Who "visits them every morning, and tries them every moment," that He may create in them that awareness to His presence and His guardianship which arises from developed relations between Himself and them.

Without this realised relation the culture we obtain either from books, from Nature, or from

fellowship with men, will not preserve that lofty ideal of conduct and of character which can alone lead us on to a noble manhood and a glorious destiny.

In a passage we do well to ponder, Lord Morley says : "The great need in modern culture, which is scientific in method, rationalistic in spirit, and utilitarian in purpose, is to find some effective agency for cherishing within us the ideal. That is, I take it, the business and the function of literature." He then proceeds, in striking refutation of this last statement, to make the following confession : "Literature alone will not make a good citizen ; it will not make a good man. History affords too many proofs that scholarship and learning by no means purge men of acrimony, of vanity, of arrogance, and of a murderous tenacity about trifles."

What a testimony is here offered by a cultured sceptic to the necessity of genuine religion as an aid to culture ! Where else shall we find the charity which conquers bitterness, which engenders humility, which delivers the intellect from the dominance of trifles, and which cherishes the ideal ? Literature, indeed, may aid us as a defence against the narrow utilitarian tendency of modern culture, but it must be the literature

which passes beyond and above that which is local and limited, coldly scientific, or unbelievably rational, into the region of the spiritual and the eternal.

### CULTURE AND GOD

We cannot separate the idea of culture in man from the acknowledgment of God—God with him, to work on him, life on life ; to teach him, to discipline and develop him, to greater him, to “lift him up for ever.” Without God he is a king discrowned, and despoiled of the empire to which he is born heir. His relation to God is the commanding relation of his being, at once the source and the inspiration of his intellect. Only he can be esteemed a scholar whom God illuminates and guides.

There are three distinct boons possible to man, boons which attest his higher nature and separate him from the mere animal by the whole diameter of being. These are—first, spiritual good or personal union with God ; second, moral good or voluntary obedience to the law of God ; third, natural good or the completion and satisfaction of his nature in the achievement of the great end for which he was created, or, in other words, for the realisation and enjoyment of himself. To all these

supreme forms of good, vital religion, or the converse of the soul with God, is the great and only avenue. When men stand apart from God their manhood is dwarfed and degraded, their thought and study is given to trifles and to shadows; they live in strife and disunion with themselves, they are blinded to the grand and enduring relations of existence; they are unfaithful to their divinest faculties and powers

### DWARFED SOULS

There is no sadder sight than that of a man highly gifted, elaborately cultured, with all the other capacities of his nature strong and active, but those of faith and reverence dormant.

Humboldt has said, "The finest result which earth can show to its Maker is a finished man." There can, however, be no personal completeness without religion. Unpossessed of life in God, a man only half lives. No matter what intelligence or learning he may possess; no matter what his delight in the visions of Nature or the productions of Art, no matter what his health of body and his capacity for the pleasures of sense, wanting the true high life of the soul—the life of intercourse with God, the life which trusts and hopes and worships, the life which enters into the sacred mysteries and potentiali-

ties of prayer—wanting this life, human existence is imperfect and incomplete. “For,” asks Tennyson,

For what are men better than sheep or goats  
That nourish a blind life within the brain,  
If, knowing God, they lift not hands in prayer  
Both for themselves and those whom they call  
friend?

Religion is the main stimulant, purifier, and support of the intellect. God is the “Father of lights,” of all true lights of life, and therefore of intellectual light. Religion quells the beast in us and gives the mind full play. Newman has said with deep truth, “All virtue and goodness tend to make men powerful in this world.”

Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how mean a thing is man!

Sin is disorder, and makes for a purposeless existence. Hurl a planet from its orbit, remove it from its central sun, and the result is darkness, cold, and death. Religion keeps the soul in its orbit, where it drinks in the light of life.

Men who lose God lose their all-enlightening, all-fostering centre, and wander into confusion—often, alas! into madness and suicide. What a tale could be told of splendid minds which sin has darkened and shattered!

The writer of these pages here makes the

confession that until he found God he never found himself. His intellectual faculties were wasted on trifles, and his life was without unity —aimless and a chaos. Until he found his centre in God he produced nothing which was of real value to any human soul.

In a kindred mood George MacDonald wrote : “ All my difficulties and confusions have gone on clearing themselves up ever since I set out to walk in the way of the Lord. My consciousness of life is threefold what it was ; my perception of what is lovely around me and my delight in it threefold , the same with my hope and my courage, my love to my kind, my power of forgiveness ”

The records of John Newton, John Bunyan, yea, even of Paul the Apostle, bear the same witness. Until Saul of Tarsus encountered the Christ of God on the way to Damascus his life was a broken and aimless thing, and his fine intellect the prey of passion and insensate hate. But having found the Christ, he rose to a mental stature “ above all Greek, above all Roman fame ”

The great and fruitful ages of the world have not been ages of scepticism, but ages of belief, and its greatest thinkers have not been sceptics but believers. Æschylus, Sophocles, and Plato,

those anointed prophets of heathendom, were essentially religious. Buddha, waiting upon God, found the light which illumined millions, Copernicus was as famous for his piety as for his genius. Kepler as he studied the laws of creation cried, "O God! I am thinking Thy thoughts after Thee." Galileo loved God as he loved truth. Bacon held theology to be the queen of all the sciences Newton scaled the heavens, not to storm them, but to bow before God in adoring worship; and it was from the altar of religion that Dante, Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning brought their celestial fire.

### RELIGION AND SCIENCE

A difficulty may exist in the mind of some of our readers with regard to the supposed conflict between religion and science. Let them be assured that no such conflict really exists. There is a natural world and there is a spiritual world, and in order to attain full-orbed and sufficing knowledge we must recognise both. The problem of science is to ascertain the laws of Nature. The problem of religion is to ascertain the underlying reality. Science meets by its conclusions the necessities of the logical understanding Religion meets the thirst of the

human soul in its affinity with God. In place of standing in opposition to science, religion is really the complement and the sublimation of science.

"Reason's final move," says Pascal, "consists in recognising that there is an infinity of things which go beyond her" It is here that spiritual science steps in--here that the finer faculties of the soul assert their transcendent power. Man may not by physical processes, or by the exercise of the mere logical understanding, be able to find out God. But if that other and divinest faculty in us--the religious faculty--can apprehend through the darkness "the hands that reach through Nature moulding man," there is nothing to compel us to reject these inferences of faith, which are not irrational, but which rest upon their proper evidence in the higher ranges of our being.

Two worlds are ours, 'tis only sin  
 Forbids us to descry  
 The mystic heaven and earth within,  
 Plain as the sea and sky

There is a mutual interdependence of religion and science. The two orders of truth should not be regarded as foreign to each other. There is no real antagonism between them. Let us

'render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things which are God's.'

### LOFTY THEMES OF THOUGHT

By the very nature of its themes of thought and contemplation religion elevates and expands the intellect. If the mind is left merely to the trivial and the commonplace, it is dwarfed to the dimensions of that with which it is occupied. Cabined and confined it surrenders its native majesty, whereas its wistful eyes should "look up toward the spaces on which no line can be laid, and toward the lights which make eternal day." Separate the mind of a man from God and from eternity, and you have only a crawling worm, or at the best an intellectual animal. Nothing is left to invest his existence with any high meaning, or to lend grandeur to the beatings of his heart. In the mournful language of a poet-sceptic—

He toils, and is clothed with derision ;  
 He sows, and he shall not reap ;  
 His life is a watch and a vision,  
 Betwixt a sleep and a sleep.

But, on the other hand, how lofty and exalting are the themes to which religion directs the intellect ! In this realm we think God's

thoughts after Him, and are greatened by them as by the vision of the midnight sky. By the wider extension of horizon that it gives ; by the new and lofty standard of values which it presents ; by the setting of life's small concerns and trivial interests in the light of the Eternal, religion expands and ennobles the intellect

The mind interested only in trivial things suggests those interiors of the Dutch painters, where every detail is accurately drawn—the hearth, the clock, the flagon, the tobacco-pipe, the kitten on the floor—but we long for the open window with its vision of the distant hills, its splash of sunset in the west, or its glimpse of the evening star.

Furthermore, the value of religion in mental culture is felt in its rebuke of the things which hinder our education and development. Conceit, prejudice, self-indulgence, animalism, all of which fetter and cloud the intellect, are shamed in the presence of its transcendent issues and reveal their essential meanness and unworthiness. We blush to harbour them amid the eternal sanctities.

It is, indeed, a privilege to commune with poets, sages, historians, philosophers, who are the teachers of all generations, but there are "oracles which stir our clay" yet more divinely.

It is given us also to walk with prophets, apostles, evangelists, teachers, instructed by God's unerring spirit, drinking in and giving back the ineffable radiance of the Great Teacher, following Whom we do "not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." It is not the quantity but the quality of knowledge which is the great matter.

Without question, the most important of all knowledge is "the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." In its presence all other knowledge pales—

As the stars see the sun and falter,  
Touched to death by diviner eyes.

### THE BIBLE

This prepares our way for the statement that among the books which are essential to the culture for which we plead, that which has been rightly termed "The Book of God" demands our first consideration. All the studies which attract the inquiring mind are secondary in importance and grandeur to

Those sacred writings in whose antique leaves  
The memories of heaven entreasured lie

Form what theories we may of the manner and extent of its inspiration, we cannot fail

to be impressed by the lonely pre-eminence of this book over all other messages and voices which the eager heart of man has interpreted as oracles of God. It is true that the light in this book dawns gradually, being adapted to the weak and diseased eyes on which it falls. We trace a process of evolution in it as in the world of Nature. But none can doubt that the light imparted is light from heaven. These records speak as never man spake. The various writers are evidently the organs of a Divine Revealer—the instruments of a larger and loftier Mind. Not seldom they are caught up as in a whirlwind and carried where they do not wish to go. They quiver and bow before the rush of an inspiration and an impulse which beats upon them as reeds are swayed and tremble in a torrent. In them men do not ascend to God, but God descends to men. The sublimity of the book cannot fail to impress the most casual reader. These men alone are able to tear through the gates of speech the large utterances of Deity. These records reveal the character of God and His will concerning us as they are not revealed elsewhere. And it is on this account that they claim a consideration which it is our spiritual life to take heed to, and our spiritual death to disregard.

**BOOKS ON RELIGION AND THEOLOGY**

We have asserted the lofty pre-eminence of the Hebrew Scriptures of the Old, and the Greek Scriptures of the New Testament. But "God is not dead that He should speak no more," and there are many other books on sacred themes which deserve attention and which will repay study.

That our readers may be saved from embarrassment, our selection shall be brief, and consist only of books which we have ourselves read with profit and delight.

Bunyan : *Pilgrim's Progress*.

Thomas à Kempis · *The Imitation of Christ*.

Pascal : *Thoughts on Religion*.

James Martineau : *Endeavours after the Christian Life* and *A Study of Religion*.

Hardwick : *Christ and Other Masters*.

Bruce : *The Training of the Twelve*.

Dean Stanley : *Lectures on the Jewish Church*

Dr. Maclaren : *Sermons and Expositions*.

Henry Ward Beecher : *Sermons*.

W. L. Watkinson : *Sermons*.

Dr. Vaughan *Sermons*.

F. W. Robertson · *Sermons*

Channing : *Sermons and The Perfect Life*

Fairfax . *Life of Christ*.

Geikie : *Life of Christ.*

Edersheim : *Life of Christ.*

Clarke : *The Christian Doctrine of God.*

Seeley : *Ecce Homo.*

Lacordaire : *Jesus Christ*

Conybeare and Howson : *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*

Dale . *The Living Christ and the Four Gospels.*

Faber . *The Creator and the Creature*

Denney : *Studies in Theology.*

Sabatier : *Philosophy of Religion.*

Illingworth . *Divine Immanence and Reason and Revelation*

W. R. Alger . *Doctrine of a Future Life.*

James Freeman Clarke . *Ten Great Religions.*

Dorner : *System of Christian Doctrine*

As witnesses for a spiritual universe to which the soul of man is mysteriously attuned, these books are of great value. If objection is made to the so-called heterodoxy of some of these writers, we reply that we live in an age when religion is moving into a larger house, and we bless some of the broader religious thinkers for those nobler views of God by which they have corrected errors and misrepresentations received by many of us in our childhood, from well-meaning but narrow and imperfect teachers

" Channing," says Henry Drummond, " taught

me, I think, to believe in God. I had always been brought up to know there was a God, but I did not like the idea; I had much rather there had been no God. - But when I read Channing's book, I saw the character of Deity put in such a way that I was glad there was a God."

These remarks afford, in our judgment, a very suitable touchstone for religious reading. Read the religious books which give a worthy conception of God—a conception in harmony with that final revelation from the lips of the greatest of all teachers where He said, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Fathom, if you can, that "heart of infinite love beating and bleeding for human happiness." Move in the footsteps of the Divine One who passed no sorrow heedlessly by—the great High Priest of our profession who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

See Him weeping with the living and weeping for the dead. See Him taking the little children in His arms to bless them. See Him welcoming the shunned, the lost, the shelterless, the waifs of the world, the outcasts from the Temple, whom the Priest and the Levite had alike passed by. See Him lifting the trampled woman from the dust where men had flung her, and touching

her into the beauty of a lily of the Lord. Mark all this and consider the meaning of the fruitful words. "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."

Yes, one unquestioned text we read,  
 All doubt beyond, all fear above,  
 Nor crackling pile, nor cursing creed  
 Can burn or blot it—"God is love."

#### A CALL TO LIFE IN GOD

Will our readers pardon us if, in conclusion, we call them to a living experience of the reality and power of religion? Amid the many interests which appeal to us in this our solemn but brief existence, rising one above another in importance and in grandeur, religion stands supreme, without a rival and without a peer. To it of right belongs the sovereign place. It is more to man than the earth, or the heavens, or all material things—more than the highest valour of the strong, the finest thought of the wise, or the deepest love of the tender and the true.

Other things which speak to us speak only to the senses, or to the cold intellect, or to the carnal heart, but religion finds us in our deepest nature. It unseals those springs of thought and emotion which lie in the profoundest depths

of our being. It addresses our noblest faculties. It touches those God-like susceptibilities which are the distinctive glory of man, taking hold of the soul's eternity and the soul's deep need to uplift and settle it in the everlasting rest of God. It is no mere device for escaping hell and gaining heaven. It is manhood at its highest. No man who realises what his manhood means will ask, "What has religion to do with me?" The flower might as well ask this of the sunshine and the rain. It is our life—the shaper of all within us which is beautiful, the sustainer of all within us which is divine. So true is this, that he who spurns its high calling barters freedom to become a slave, surrenders manhood to embrace animalism, and chooses death in preference to life.

Standing, in virtue of his capacity for God, at the summit of the world and all which it contains, man cannot surrender himself utterly to any merely worldly ambition without degradation, without living for that which is below himself. The irreligious spirit, conversing only with the lusts and vanities of this fading and unstable life, is dwarfed by its unworthy aims. If it would rise to its true height and native dignity, it must find its end in God. It must be "loyal to the royal" in itself.

Though wandering in a stranger land,  
 Though on the waste no altar stand,  
 Take comfort, thou art not alone,  
 While faith hath claim'd thee for her own.

Wouldst thou a temple ? Look above—  
 The heavens stretch over all in love.  
 A Book ? For thine Evangel scan  
 The wondrous history of man

The holy band of saints renowned  
 Embrace thee, brother-like, around ;  
 Their sufferings and their triumphs rise  
 In hymns immortal to the skies

And though no organ voice be heard,  
 In harmony the winds are stirred ;  
 And these above the stars upraise  
 Their ancient song of deathless praise.

The God who loved us into being has made us for Himself, and He alone is great enough to meet our necessities and to still in us the pulses of desire ; great enough for the Will, empowering it for righteousness and noble living ; great enough for the Imagination, filling it with splendour and with visions of all the glory that shall be ; great enough for the Intellect, quickening its finest activity, and commanding its reverent homage ; great enough for the Heart, inspiring it with passionate affection and proving for it as the ocean to the

river; great enough for Hope, broadening its horizons and fixing it as an anchor within the veil; great enough for Aspiration, lending it wings for flight toward the mansions of eternity and the worship of the stainless Infinite.

The culture of religion, therefore, is a matter of the very first importance. Nothing must be permitted to interfere with its unequalled majesty and its transcendent claims. We must cherish the sacred fire which God Himself hath kindled, and which is fed alike by our loftiest aspirations and our profoundest needs. We must reach ever upward towards the Perfect and the Immutable—towards the Holy One Who, amid all chance and change, abideth for ever. With the sunshine of His love upon our wings, we must mount up as eagles and fly towards Him. If, when our hearts condemn us, we feel awed, and well-nigh overwhelmed, by His immeasurable majesty, we must find refuge in His pitying Fatherhood. We must sing with Faber, as he nestles like a trusting child beneath the sheltering Presence which embraces the infinite alike in time and space:

O Majesty unspeakable and dread!

Wert Thou less mighty than Thou art,  
Thou wert, O Lord! too great for our belief,  
Too little for our heart. . . .

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But greatness, which is infinite, makes room  
For all things in its lap to lie ;  
We should be crushed by a magnificence  
Short of infinity .

But what is infinite must be a home,  
A shelter for the meanest life,  
Where it is free to reach its greatest growth  
Far from the touch of strife . . .

Thus doth Thy hospitable greatness lie  
Outside us like a boundless sea ;  
We cannot lose ourselves where all is home,  
Nor drift away from Thee.

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